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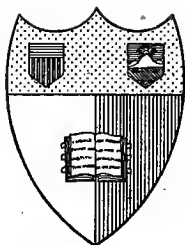
THE LADY FROM THE SEA

A Drama in Five Acts



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THE LADY FROM THE SEA

A DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS

By HENRIK IBSEN

TRANSLATED FROM THE NORWEGIAN BY
CLARA BELL

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CHARACTERS.

DOCTOR WANGEL, *A Parish Doctor.*

MRS. ELLIDA WANGEL, *His Second Wife.*

BOLETTE; } *His Daughters by His First Wife.*
HILDA, }

ARNHOLM, *A Professor.*

LYNGSTRAND.

BALLESTED.

A STRANGER.

YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE TOWN.

TOURISTS.

SUMMER VISITORS.

The action takes place in the summer season, at a small town on a fiord on the north coast of Norway.

THE LADY FROM THE SEA.

ACT I.

[DOCTOR WANGEL'S house with a large furnished verandah to the left. A garden in front and round the house. In front of the veranda a flagstaff. In the garden to the right a summer-house with a table and seats; a fence with a small gate in the background. Beyond the fence a path along the shore. A walk leads to this gate. Between trees the fiord is seen, with high hills and peaks in the distance. It is a warm, bright summer day.]

[BALLESTED, middle-aged, dressed in an old velvet jacket and broad felt hat, stands by the flagstaff arranging the ropes. The flag lies on the ground. A little way off are an easel and canvas; beside them on a camp-stool lie brushes, a palette and a paint-box.]

[BOLETTE WANGEL comes out of the house on to the veranda. She carries a large vase with flowers, which she places on a table.]

BOLETTE. Well, Ballested, can you make it work?

BALLESTED. Certainly, Miss Wangel; that is a very small matter. May I ask do you expect a stranger to see you to-day?

BOLETTE. Yes; we expect Professor Arnholm this morning. He arrived in the town last night.

BALLESTED. Arnholm? Stay, was not Arnholm the name of the man who was tutor here some time since?

BOLETTE. Yes; it is the same.

BALLESTED. Ah, indeed. Then he is coming into the neighborhood again?

BOLETTE. That is why we wish the flag to fly.

BALLESTED. Why, that is very natural.

BOLETTE goes back into the room. Soon after LYGSTRAND comes along from the path on the right and stands interested by the easel and painting things. He is a slight young man, simply but decently dressed, and looks ill.]

LYGSTRAND (outside the fence). Good morning.

BALLESTED (turning round). Heh! Good morning. (He hoists the flag.) That's done—now for the next thing. (He fastens the ropes and busies himself at the easel.) Good morning—I have not indeed the pleasure——

LYGSTRAND. You it would seem are a painter.

BALLESTED. So it would seem. Otherwise I should not be painting.

LYGSTRAND. That is self-evident. Might I be allowed to come in?

BALLESTED. You would perhaps like to see it closer?

LYGSTRAND. Yes, very gladly.

BALLESTED. There is not much to see. But pray come in. You can walk round.

LYGSTRAND. Many thanks. (He comes in at the garden gate.)

BALLESTED (painting). It is the fiord out there among the islands that I am trying to paint.

LYGSTRAND. Yes; I see that.

BALLESTED. But figures are still wanting. Here in the town there is not a model to be found.

LYNGSTRAND. Then there are to be figures in it?

BALLESTED. Yes. Here by the rock in the foreground a half-dead mermaid is to be lying.

LYNGSTRAND. Why half-dead?

BALLESTED. She has wandered in from the sea and can not find her way out again. And so she lies dying in the brackish water you are to understand.

LYNGSTRAND. Aye, to be sure.

BALLESTED. It was the lady of the house here who put it into my head to paint something of the kind.

LYNGSTRAND. What will you call the picture when it is finished?

BALLESTED. I thought of calling it the Mermaid's Death.

LYNGSTRAND. That does capitally. You can make a good thing of it, I am sure.

BALLESTED (*looking at him*). One of the profession, perhaps?

LYNGSTRAND. A painter, do you mean?

BALLESTED. Yes.

LYNGSTRAND. No, not exactly. But I mean to be a sculptor. My name is Hans Lyngstrand.

BALLESTED. And you are a sculptor? Aye, aye. Sculpture is a beautiful and pleasing art. I believe I have seen you about the streets and roads. Have you been staying long hereabouts?

LYNGSTRAND. No; I have been here only a fortnight. But I shall see if I can remain through the summer.

BALLESTED. Do you enjoy the watering-place life?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes. I shall see if it gives me a little strength.

BALLESTED. But you are not weak?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes I am rather weak. But it is nothing serious. It is only a little tightness about the chest.

BALLESTED. Oh, a mere trifle. Still you should take the advice of a clever physician.

LYNGSTRAND. I thought of taking an opportunity of consulting Dr. Wangel.

BALLESTED. Aye, do so (*looking out to the left*). Here comes the steamboat; crowded with passengers on deck. Certainly traveling has developed in the most amazing way these last few years.

LYNGSTRAND. There is a great deal of traffic here it seems to me.

BALLESTED. The place is full of summer visitors. I fear very much that our good town will lose its primitive character, from the advent of so many strangers.

LYNGSTRAND. Are you a native of the place?

BALLESTED. No, but I have acclimatized myself here. I am bound to the spot by the ties of time and habit.

LYNGSTRAND. Then you have lived here a long time?

BALLESTED. Well, seventeen or eighteen years. I came with Skive's Theatrical Company. But we got into financial difficulties, and so the company was broken up and scattered to the winds.

LYNGSTRAND. But you yourself remained behind?

BALLESTED. I remained. And it has turned out well for me. I worked at first at decorative painting principally, I must tell you.

BOLETTE *comes out with a rocking chair which she places in the veranda.*

BOLETTE (*speaking into the room*). Hilda, see if you can find the worked footstool for father.

LYNGSTRAND (*going toward the veranda and greeting her*). Good morning Miss Wangel.

BOLETTE (*by the balustrade*). Why! Is it you Mr. Lyngstrand? Good morning. Excuse me a moment. (*She goes into the house.*)

BALLESTED. So you know the family.

LYNGSTRAND. Not well. I have only met the young ladies here and there at other houses. And I have talked a little with the doctor's wife when the band plays at the "Bellevue." She told me I might have the pleasure of calling on them.

BALLESTED. Well, I tell you what. You should cultivate the acquaintance.

LYNGSTRAND. I have been thinking of coming to call. A formal visit is expected of me. If I could only find a pretext.

BALLESTED. Oh! a pretext (*looking up the left*). Plague take it all! (*He gathers up his things.*) The steamboat is come in to the landing-place. I must go to the hotel; perhaps some of the new-comers may want me. I also employ myself as hairdresser and friseur, I must tell you.

LYNGSTRAND. You are evidently a versatile genius.

BALLESTED. In a small place a man must know how to ac—acclimatize himself to various professions. If you should want anything in the hair-dressing way—a little pomatum or the like—you have only to ask for Ballested the dancing-master.

LYNGSTRAND. The dancing-master?

BALLESTED. Leader of the company of horn-players, if you prefer it. We give a concert this evening at the

Bellevue. Good by, good by. (*He goes through the iron gate with his painting things, and off to the left.*)

HILDA comes out with a stool, and BOLETTE carrying more flowers. LYGSTRAND bows to HILDA from the garden below.

HILDA (*standing by the balustrade does not return his bow*). Bolette told me that you had ventured in to-day.

LYGSTRAND. Yes, I took the liberty of coming in for a little while.

HILDA. Have you been out for a morning's walk?

LYGSTRAND. Oh, no. There is still time for a long walk to-day.

HILDA. Have you been bathing then?

LYGSTRAND. Yes, I was in the sea for a little while. I saw your mother there. She went into her bath-house.

HILDA. Who was it?

LYGSTRAND. Your mother.

HILDA. Ah, yes, yes. (*She places the stool in front of the rocking-chair.*)

BOLETTE (*interposing*). Did you see anything of father's boat out on the fiord?

LYGSTRAND. Aye, I fancied I saw a sailing boat steering landwards.

BOLETTE. That was certainly papa. He has been out to the islands to visit a sick person. (*She arranges the things on the table.*)

LYGSTRAND (*walking up to the steps of the veranda*). Why these are perfectly splendid flowers.

BOLETTE. Yes, does not it look pretty?

LYGSTRAND. Oh, it is quite lovely. It looks as if there were a wedding in the house.

HILDA. It is very much the same thing.

LYNGSTRAND. I might easily have guessed it. It is your father's birthday no doubt.

BOLETTE (*with a warning look at HILDA*). H'm, h'm.

HILDA (*without heeding it*). No, it is mother's.

LYNGSTRAND. Indeed — your mother's.

BOLETTE (*angrily but in a low voice*). But Hilda —

HILDA (*in the same tone*). Let me be. (*To LYNGSTRAND.*) You are surely going home now to have your breakfast.

LYNGSTRAND (*going down the steps*). Yes, I ought, to be sure, to get something to eat.

HILDA. I suppose that the cooking is very good down at the hotel?

LYNGSTRAND. I am no longer living at the hotel. It is too expensive for me.

HILDA. Where are you staying now?

LYNGSTRAND. I am living at Mrs. Jensen's.

HILDA. Which Mrs. Jensen's?

LYNGSTRAND. Old Mother Jensen, the midwife.

HILDA. Excuse me Mr. Lyngstrand, but I really have other things to do —

LYNGSTRAND. Ah, I ought not to have said that to you.

HILDA. What should you not have said?

LYNGSTRAND. What I said then.

HILDA (*looking at him unpleasantly*). I do not understand you in the least.

LYNGSTRAND. No, no. But I will now say good-by to you, young ladies.

BOLETTE (*coming to the steps*). Good-by, good-by Mr. Lyngstrand. You must excuse us to-day — but another time — when you can find time — and when

you are inclined — in short, you must look in on my father and — and on us.

LYNGSTRAND. I will; many thanks. I shall do so with the greatest pleasure. (*He bows and goes out by the garden door. As he goes along the path out to the left he bows again towards the veranda.*)

HILDA (*half aloud*). Adieu, Monsieur. Be so good as to greet Mother Jensen from me.

BOLETTE (*in a low voice shaking her by the arm*). Hilda! you ill-behaved girl! Are you gone mad? He might easily have heard you.

HILDA. Pshaw! Do you think I care about that.

BOLETTE (*looking to the right*). Here comes papa. (*Dr. WANGEL in a traveling suit and with a small handbag, comes up from the foot path.*)

WANGEL. Here I am again little girls. (*He comes up the path on the right.*)

BOLETTE (*goes down into the garden to meet him*). Oh, I am so glad you are come.

HILDA (*also going down to him*). Have you done with going out for the whole day now father?

WANGEL. Oh, no. I must go down to the office in an hour or so. Tell me, do you know whether Arnholm is come?

BOLETTE. Yes, he came last night; he is at the hotel; we sent to inquire.

WANGEL. Then you have not yet seen him?

BOLETTE. No. But he will certainly call on us this morning.

WANGEL. Yes; that he quite certainly will.

HILDA (*pulling him*). Now, father, you must look about you.

WANGEL (*looking up at the veranda*). Ah, I see well enough, child; you have made it quite gay.

BOLETTE. Do not you think we have made it pretty?

WANGEL. Indeed, I must say you have. Are we—are we alone in the house now?

HILDA. Yes; she is gone.

BOLETTE (*interrupting her*). Mamma is gone to bathe.

WANGEL (*looks kindly at BOLETTE and pats her on the head; then he says with some hesitation*). Listen, children. Will you have all this remain so all day? And the flag hoisted all day, too?

HILDA. Oh, you might be sure of that, papa.

WANGEL. H'm—well—but are you—

BOLETTE (*looking at him and nodding*). You may make believe that we have done all this for Professor Arnholm's sake. When such a good friend comes for the first time to greet you—

HILDA (*smiling and nudging him*). Think—he who was Bolette's teacher, father!

WANGEL (*with a faint smile*). You two are really a pair of hussies. Well, Heaven knows—it is, after all, quite natural that we should remember her who is no more among us. But at the same time—here, Hilda (*he gives her the traveling bag*). Go down to the office with that. No, my children, I do not like all this. It is overdoing it, you understand. That we should do this every year— Well, what is to be said? It can, perhaps, not be done in any other way.

HILDA (*is about to go down the garden to the left with the bag, but stands still, turns round and points with her hand*). See, some gentlemen are coming from out yonder. That must certainly be the professor.

BOLETTE (*looking out*). That is the professor. Well, that is a good joke. Do you think that middle-aged man is Arnholm.

WANGEL. Wait a minute, child. If I may trust my senses—is it not he? Certainly, certainly it is.

BOLETTE (*gazing in silent astonishment*). Yes, good Heavens! I believe it is.

PROFESSOR ARNHOLM *in an elegant morning suit, with gold spectacles and a light cane, comes up the path from the left. He seems somewhat over-fatigued, looks round the garden, greets them in a friendly fashion and comes in through the gate.*

WANGEL (*meeting him*). Welcome, dear Professor. A hearty welcome back to the old place.

ARNHOLM. Thank you, thank you, Dr. Wangel. A thousand thanks. (*They shake hands and come together across the garden.*)

ARNHOLM. And there are the girls (*he holds out his hands as he looks at them*). I should hardly have known them again.

WANGEL. No, that I can well believe.

ARNHOLM. And yet—Bolette perhaps. Yes—I should have recognized Bolette.

WANGEL. Scarcely, I think. It must be eight or nine years since you saw her——. Oh yes, there have been many and great changes here in that time.

ARNHOLM (*looking about him*). I fancy not so very many. Excepting that the trees are very much grown—and that your arbor has been made——

WANGEL. Oh, outside this garden too——

ARNHOLM (*smiling*). Also, of course, that you now have two grown up and marriageable daughters.

WANGEL. Oh, only one of them is marriageable.

HILDA (*aside*). Nay, only listen to papa.

WANGEL. But now, what do you think of sitting a while on the veranda. It is cooler than this. Pray come.

ARNHOLM. Thank you, thank you, dear doctor. (*They go up ; WANGEL offers ARNHOLM the rocking-chair.*)

WANGEL. There. Now you shall sit there quite quietly and rest yourself; for you really look somewhat tired after your journey.

ARNHOLM. Oh, that is nothing. Here, amid these surroundings —

BOLETTE (*to WANGEL*). Shall I bring a little syrup and soda-water into the garden-room? It will soon be too hot out here.

WANGEL. Ayo, do so my child. Let us have some soda-water and syrup. And a little cognac, too, perhaps.

BOLETTE. What, cognac as well?

WANGEL. Only a little. In case it should be wanted.

BOLETTE. Yes, very well. Hilda, go down to the office with that bag. (*BOLETTE goes into the house, shutting the door after her. HILDA takes up the bag and goes off through the garden behind the house, to the left.*)

ARNHOLM (*whose eyes have followed BOLETTE*). That is really a — those are really two beautiful girls who have grown up for you.

WANGEL (*seating himself*). Yes; do not you think so!

ARNHOLM. Bolette is quite remarkable — and Hilda, too. But you, my dear doctor — do you think of remaining here all your life?

WANGEL. Oh, yes, that is quite certain. "Here born and here buried," as the saying goes. Here have I lived in perfect happiness with her who is now gone from us—her whom you knew when you were here before, Arnholm.

ARNHOLM. Yes, yes.

WANGEL. And here I still live, just as happily, with her who now fills her place. Oh, I may say that throughout a long life Fate has been very good to me.

ARNHOLM. But you have no children by your second marriage?

WANGEL. We had a little boy—two years and a half ago. But we did not keep him long; he died when he was four or five months old.

ARNHOLM. And is your wife not at home to-day?

WANGEL. Oh, yes; she must soon come in. She is down at the baths. She goes every day at this hour, whatever the weather.

ARNHOLM. Is she ailing, then?

WANGEL. Not to say ailing, exactly, though she has certainly been very nervous these few years past. At times, that is to say. I can not exactly make out what is to be done with her. But this bathing in the sea is life and delight to her, you see.

ARNHOLM. I remember that of old.

WANGEL (*with a scarcely perceptible smile*). To be sure. You knew Ellida at the time when you were teaching in Skjoldvik?

ARNHOLM. Of course. She often came on a visit to the parsonage; and I met her, too, frequently, when I was out at the lighthouse where her father lived.

WANGEL. Her life there, as you may believe, has set his deep marks on her. The people in the town here can not understand her at all. They call her the Lady from the Sea

ARNHOLM. Do they?

WANGEL. They do. So you see— Talk to her of the old days, dear Arnholm; that will do her heart good.

ARNHOLM (*looking at him doubtfully*). Have you any particular reason for thinking that?

WANGEL. Yes; certainly I have.

ELLIDA'S voice is heard coming up from the garden to the right.

ELLIDA. Is that you Wangel?

WANGEL (*rising*). Yes, dear.

ELLIDA WANGEL *wearing a large, loose wrapper and with wet hair hanging over her shoulders comes from among the trees by the arbor.* PROFESSOR ARNHOLM rises.

WANGEL (*smiles and holds out his hands to her*). Well, here is our mermaid.

ELLIDA (*goes eagerly up to the veranda and seizes his hands*). Thank God that I see you again. When did you come?

WANGEL. But just now; a short time since (*pointing to ARNHOLM*). But will you not greet an old acquaintance?

ELLIDA (*offering her hand to ARNHOLM*). So here you are? Welcome. And excuse me for not being at home —

ARNHOLM. Oh, I beg — Make no ceremony.

WANGEL. Was the water nice and fresh, to-day?

ELLIDA. Fresh! Good Heavens! The water is never fresh here; so lukewarm and so dull. Ugh! The water is sick here in the fiords.

ARNHOLM. Sick?

ELLIDA. Yes, sick. And I believe it makes me sick too.

WANGEL (*smiling*). Well, you recommend the bathing place, I must say.

ARNHOLM. <I rather believe that you, Mrs. Wangel, have a peculiar affinity both to the sea and to all that belongs to it.>

ELLIDA. Yes, perhaps so. I almost believe it myself. But see how festal the girls have made everything in your honor.

WANGEL (*embarrassed*). H'm — (*He looks at his watch.*) I must very soon —

ARNHOLM. Was it really in my honor?

ELLIDA. Yes, that you may be quite sure. We do not do such things every day. Ugh! How frightfully hot it is here under this awning. (*She goes down into the garden.*) Come here. Here at any rate there is a breath of air. (*She sits down in the arbor.*)

ARNHOLM (*following her*). I fancied the air felt quite fresh here.

ELLIDA. Yes, to you who are accustomed to the stuffy atmosphere of a big town. It is perfectly frightful in summer time, I have heard.

WANGEL (*about to go down into the garden*). My dear Ellida, now will you do what you can to entertain our good friend for an hour —

ELLIDA. Have you business to attend to?

WANGEL. Yes, I must go down to the office and then

I must change my dress a little! But I shall not be away long.

ARNHOLM (*sitting down in the arbor*). Do not hurry, dear doctor. Your wife and I shall have enough to talk over to pass the time.

WANGEL (*nodding*). Oh, yes, of that I am quite sure. Well, till we meet again — (*He goes out of the garden to the left*).

ELLIDA (*after a short silence*). Do not you think it is pleasant here?

ARNHOLM. I find it very pleasant here now.

ELLIDA. This summer-house is called my summer-house, for it was I who had it put up — or rather Wangel, to please me.

ARNHOLM. And here you are wont to sit?

ELLIDA. Yes; I sit here most of the day.

ARNHOLM. And the girls as well?

ELLIDA. No; the girls — they stay in the veranda.

ARNHOLM. And Wangel himself?

ELLIDA. Oh, Wangel goes to and fro. Sometimes he is here with me, and sometimes with them.

ARNHOLM. Is it you who like to have it so?

ELLIDA. I believe that all parties find this arrangement best. We can speak across to each other — when we happen to have anything to say.

ARNHOLM (*after thinking a little while*). When I last traveled your way — out at Skjoldvik, I mean — h'm — that is a long time ago.

ELLIDA. It is at least ten years since you were there with us.

ARNHOLM. Yes; about that. But after that I remember you at the lighthouse. "Little heathen," as the

old priest used to call you, because, as they said, your father had had you baptized by the name of a ship and not by a Christian woman's name.

ELLIDA. And what if he did?

ARNHOLM. How little did I think then that I should see you again here as Mrs. Wangel.

ELLIDA. No. At that time Wangel was not yet — at that time the girl's first mother was still alive — their real mother, I should say.

ARNHOLM. To be sure, to be sure. But even if it had not been so — even if he had been free — I should never have thought that it would come about.

ELLIDA. Nor I neither. Never in the world — at that time.

ARNHOLM. Wangel is so worthy, so respected, so thoroughly good, and so kind to every one.

ELLIDA (*heartily*). Yes, indeed.

ARNHOLM. But he must be as unlike you, I should have thought, as east and west.

ELLIDA. There you are in the right. He certainly is.

ARNHOLM. Well, but how then did it come about? How did it happen?

ELLIDA. Oh, my dear Arnholm, you must not question me on that point. I should not be able to explain to you. And even if I could, you would never be able to understand or enter into it in the very least.

ARNHOLM. Indeed! (*in a lower tone*). Have you ever confided to your husband anything about me? I mean, of course, about the ineffectual step — to which I, once upon a time, let myself be carried away.

ELLIDA. No. Can you think it? Not a word have I breathed to him of — of what you allude to.

ARNHOLM. I am glad of that. For I felt a little awkward at thinking that perhaps —

ELLIDA. You need never feel that. I have only told him — as is true — that you were greatly attached to me, and that you were the truest and best friend I ever had.

ARNHOLM. Thank you for that. But tell me now — why did you never write to me after I left.

ELLIDA. I thought it might, perhaps, make you angry to have any news of one who — who could not meet you in the way which you had wished. It was like reopening a painful affair, I fancied.

ARNHOLM. Well — yes, yes. You were right there, perhaps.

ELLIDA. But why did you never write?

ARNHOLM (*looking at her with a half-reproachful smile*). I? Could I make the beginning? And I be suspected of wanting to try again after such a rejection as I had experienced.

ELLIDA. Oh no; that I can not imagine. Have you never since thought of some one else to marry?

ARNHOLM. Never. I have remained faithful to my memories.

ELLIDA (*half in jest*). Oh why? Let the sad old memories go. You really should rather think of becoming a happy husband, it seems to me.

ARNHOLM. Then I must make haste about it Mrs. Wangel — Remember — I am already past seven and thirty; I say it with regret.

ELLIDA. Well, that is all the more reason to hurry the matter. (*She is silent for a time and then says gravely and softly*). Listen, my dear Arnholm. I will tell you

a thing which I could not have told you at the time if my life had depended on it.

ARNHOLM. And what is that?

ELLIDA. That when you took that vain step, as you said just now, I could not answer you otherwise than as I did.

ARNHOLM. I knew that. You had nothing to give me but your friendship. I always knew that.

ELLIDA. But you did not know that all my heart and all my thoughts were at that time elsewhere.

ARNHOLM. At that time?

ELLIDA. Yes.

ARNHOLM. But it is impossible. You are mistaking the time. I hardly think you knew Wangel then.

ELLIDA. I am not speaking of Wangel.

ARNHOLM. Not Wangel? But in those days—at Skjoldvik—I remember not a single man there whom I could think of as likely to attract and attach you.

ELLIDA. No, no. That I can well believe. For it was such a perfectly crazy thing altogether.

ARNHOLM. But let me know more about this affair.

ELLIDA. Oh, it is enough for you to know that I was at that time engaged. And now you know all?

ARNHOLM. If you had not been engaged then?

ELLIDA. What then?

ARNHOLM. Then would your answer to my letter have been a different one?

ELLIDA. How can I tell? When Wangel came, my answer was different.

ARNHOLM. What object have you now in telling me that you were then engaged?

ELLIDA (*rising as if alarmed and uneasy*). I must have some one to confide in. No, no, remain seated.

ARNHOLM. Your husband knows nothing of the matter?

ELLIDA. I told him from the first that my heart had long ago been given to another. But he did not ask to know more, and we have never alluded to it since. It was in fact nothing but a madness, and so it immediately came to nothing. That is to say, in a way.

ARNHOLM (*rising*). Only in a way? Not altogether?

ELLIDA. Yes, yes; of course. Oh, dear, kind Arnholm, it is really not as you think; it is a thing I can not explain. I do not know how I could explain to you. You would only conclude that I was ill, or that I was quite mad.

ARNHOLM. My dear lady, you must and shall tell me the whole truth.

ELLIDA. •Well, then, I will try. First I will explain to you as a sensible man that — (*she looks up and breaks off*) wait till later. Here comes a visitor.

LYNGSTRAND (*comes into the garden from the path from the left; he has a flower in his button hole, and carries a beautiful, large bouquet wrapped in paper and tied with ribbon. He stands hesitating by the veranda*).

ELLIDA (*from the summer-house*). Are you looking for the girls, Mr. Lyngstrand?

LYNGSTRAND (*turning round*). Oh, you are here, Mrs. Wangle? (*He bows and goes towards her.*) No. It is not that—not the young ladies, but yourself, Mrs. Wangel. You gave me leave to call upon you —

ELLIDA. Yes, certainly I did. You are always welcome.

LYNGSTRAND. Many thanks. And as it falls out so fortunately that there is a festival in the house to-day —

ELLIDA. Why! How did you know of it?

LYNGSTRAND. Ah, ha! I was delighted to make so free as to offer this to Mrs. Wangel. (*He bows low and holds out the bouquet.*)

ELLIDA (*smiling*). But, my dear Mr. Lyngstrand would it not be more appropriate if you gave the flowers to Professor Arnholm himself? For it is he properly speaking who —

LYNGSTRAND (*looking puzzled at them both*). Excuse me, but I do not know this gentleman. It was merely — I came in honor of your birthday, Mrs. Wangel.

ELLIDA. My birthday? You have made some mistake, Mr. Lyngstrand. It is no one's birthday in the house to-day.

LYNGSTRAND (*smiling feebly*). Oh, I know better. But I did not suppose that it could be a secret.

ELLIDA. What is it that you know?

LYNGSTRAND. That it is your birthday.

ELLIDA. Mine?

ARNHOLM (*looking inquiringly at her*). To-day? No, certainly not; no.

ELLIDA (*to LYNGSTRAND*). How did you hit on that notion?

LYNGSTRAND. It was Miss Hilda who betrayed the fact. I was in here before to-day, and asked the young ladies why all this splendor of flowers, and a flag —

ELLIDA. Yes, and then?

LYNGSTRAND. And Miss Hilda replied that it was for her mother's birthday.

ELLIDA. Their mother's. Oh, indeed!

ARNHOLM. Aha! (*He and ELLIDA look meaningly at each other.*) Well, since the young gentleman knows it, Mrs. Wangel —

ELLIDA (*to LYGSTRAND*). Yes, since in short you know it —

LYGSTRAND (*again offering the bouquet*). May I be allowed to congratulate —

ELLIDA (*taking the flowers*). Thank you so very much. Pray sit down a few minutes, Mr. Lyngstrand. (*ELLIDA, ARNHOLM and LYGSTRAND sit down in the arbor.*) This matter — my birthday — ought to have been kept a secret, professor.

ARNHOLM. It certainly should. It should not have been revealed to the uninitiated.

ELLIDA (*laying the bouquet on the table*). No, just so. Not to the uninitiated.

LYGSTRAND. I assure you I will not mention it to any living soul.

ELLIDA. Oh! that is not what I meant. But how are you now? I fancy you look better than you did.

LYGSTRAND. Yes, I think that I am going on very well. And next year, when perhaps I may go to the south —

ELLIDA. Ah, you told the girls that was your intention.

LYGSTRAND. Yes. In Bergen I have a patron who protects me, and he has promised to help me next year.

ELLIDA. How did you come across him?

LYGSTRAND. It came about in the most fortunate way. I once sailed in one of his ships —

ELLIDA. Did you? Did you like the sea?

LYNGSTRAND. No; not in the least. But my mother was just dead, and my father would not keep me at home any longer. So I had a fancy to go to sea. We were wrecked in the English Channel on the return voyage, and that was good luck for me.

ARNHOLM. How was that, pray?

LYNGSTRAND. It was in consequence of that shipwreck that I fell ill. It fell on my chest; I was so long in the cold water before I was saved; and so I had to give up the sea. It was the greatest good fortune.

ARNHOLM. Indeed? Do you think so?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes. My complaint is not at all dangerous, and now I can be a sculptor, which I like above all things. Only think—to make models in exquisite clay which yields so deliciously under your fingers!

ELLIDA. And what do you model, then? Mer-men, perhaps, or mermaids? Or perhaps some old Viking——

LYNGSTRAND. Oh, nothing of that kind as yet. As soon as I can, I shall try to do some great work—a group.

ELLIDA. To be sure; but what is the group to represent?

LYNGSTRAND. Oh, it should be something which I myself have seen.

ARNHOLM. Yes, certainly. Stick to that.

ELLIDA. But what is the something to be?

LYNGSTRAND. Well, I have thought it might be a young seaman's betrothed, lying asleep in strange unrest and dreaming. I believe I can do it in such a way that it can be seen that she is dreaming.

ARNHOLM. Is that to be all?

LYNGSTRAND. No, there will be another figure. Another figure is needed. It will be her lover, to whom she has been faithless while he was away. And he has been drowned at sea.

ARNHOLM. What did you say?

ELLIDA. He is drowned.

LYNGSTRAND. Yes; drowned at sea. But this is the marvel — that he comes home nevertheless. It is at night, and he stands by the bed and looks at her. He is to be dripping wet, as if he had just been pulled out of the water.

ELLIDA (*leaning back in her chair*). That is a very strange thing (*she closes her eyes*). Oh, I can see it quite plainly and living.

ARNHOLM. But in heaven's name, Mr— Mr——. You said just now that it should be something you had seen.

LYNGSTRAND. Well — and I have seen that — In a way, that is to say.

ARNHOLM. Seen a dead man to —

LYNGSTRAND. Well, yes. I do not mean that I have seen it exactly. I have known it by imagination, you understand. But all the same —

ELLIDA (*eager and excited*). Tell me everything that you know and can. I must know all about it.

ARNHOLM (*smiling*). Yes, it will exactly suit you. Anything with the flavor of the sea in it —

ELLIDA. How did it all happen, Mr. Lyngstrand?

LYNGSTRAND. Why, at the time when we were homeward bound on board a brig from a town called Halifax, we left a seaman behind in the hospital there, so we

took an American on board in his place. The new sailor ——

ELLIDA. The American?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes; he one day borrowed of our captain a pile of old newspapers which he was everlastingly reading, for he wanted to learn Norwegian, he said.

ELLIDA. Indeed? Well ——

LYNGSTRAND. It was one evening, in gloomy and overcast weather. Every one was on deck excepting the American and I myself. He had damaged one of his feet so that he could not use it, and I also was ailing and lay in my hammock. Well, there he sat by the port-hole, and read out of the old papers ——

ELLIDA. Well! Well! —

LYNGSTRAND. But even while he sat I could hear him growling to himself, as it were; and as I looked at him I saw his face grow as white as chalk. And he crushed and crumpled the paper, and tore it into a thousand bits. But he did it all very quietly.

ELLIDA. Did he say nothing at all; did he not speak?

LYNGSTRAND. Not a word. But presently he said, as if to himself, "Married — to another man — while I was far away."

ELLIDA (*closing her eyes and speaking in a low voice*). He said that?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes. And only think, he said it in good Norwegian. He must have had a great talent for foreign languages — that man.

ELLIDA. And what next; what happened afterwards?

LYNGSTRAND. Well the most wonderful thing, which I shall never forget while I live. He went on in a low voice. "But mine she is, and mine she shall be; and

she shall follow me. I will go home and fetch her, a drowned man out of the dark waves."

ELLIDA (*pours herself out a glass of water. Her hand shakes*). Pugh! How oppressive the heat is to-day.

LYNGSTRAND. And this he said with such strength and will, that I thought he must be the man to do it too.

ELLIDA. Do you know anything more? What became of the man?

LYNGSTRAND. Oh, he is certainly no longer living.

ELLIDA (*hastily*). Why do you believe that?

LYNGSTRAND. We were wrecked soon after in the channel—I had got down into the long-boat with the captain and five others. The steersman was in the smaller boat, and with him the American and another man.

ELLIDA. And nothing has been heard of them since?

LYNGSTRAND. Nothing whatever. My patron wrote of it just lately again in a letter. But, nevertheless, I shall take great delight in making a work of art of it. (I can see the sailor's faithless love so living before my eyes, and the avenger, who is drowned, and who, nevertheless, comes home from sea—I can see them both quite clearly.)

ELLIDA. So can I (*she rises*). Come, let us go indoors; or rather go down to Wangel. I fancy it is dreadfully hot here. (*She goes out of the arbor.*)

LYNGSTRAND (*rising when she does*). I, for my part, must take my leave. I only meant to pay a short visit in honor of your birthday.

ELLIDA. Well—as you will. (*Gives him her hand.*) Good-by, and thank you for the flowers.

LYNGSTRAND (*bows and goes out through the gate to the left*).

ARNHOLM (*stands up and walks on with ELLIDA*). I see that the story went to your heart, dear Mrs. Wangel.

ELLIDA. Oh, yes, you may well say that, although —

ARNHOLM. But in fact it is nothing else than might have been expected.

ELLIDA (*looking at him in amazement*). Expected?

ARNHOLM. Yes; it seems so to me.

ELLIDA. To be expected that a man should rise again — come again in such a way!

ARNHOLM. But what in the world — Is it that half-crazy sculptor's traveler's tale?

ELLIDA. Oh, dear Arnholm; he is not so crazy perhaps after all.

ARNHOLM. Is it this talk about a dead man that has disturbed you so? And I who believe that —

ELLIDA. What did you believe?

ARNHOLM. I naturally believe that it was mere acting on your part. That you sat here in misery because you were an intruder at this secretly-kept family festival; because your husband and his children live a life in their memories, in which you have no part.

ELLIDA. Oh no, no. That must be as it may. I have no right to expect my husband to be wholly and solely mine.

ARNHOLM. It seems to me that you might have.

ELLIDA. Yes; but I have not, that is the fact. I too live a life which the others have no part in.

ARNHOLM. You (*more gently*)! Am I to understand you? You really love your husband?

ELLIDA. Oh, indeed, yes. I have learned to love him with all my heart; and for that very reason it is so dreadful, so inexplicable, so inconceivable —

ARNHOLM. Now you must confide your whole and entire trouble to me! Will you not, Mrs. Wangel?

ELLIDA. I can not, my good friend. Not now, at any rate. Later perhaps.

BOLETTE *comes out on the veranda and down into the garden.*

BOLETTE. Here comes father from the office. Shall we not sit all together in the garden-room?

ELLIDA. To be sure; let us go there.

WANGEL, *who has changed his dress, comes up with HILDA from behind the house on the left.*

WANGEL. Here I am, you see, a free man. Now I should enjoy swallowing a good cool drink.

ELLIDA. Wait a little (*she goes to the arbor and fetches the bouquet*).

HILDA. Look, oh, look! All the loveliest flowers. Where did you get them?

ELLIDA. They were given to me by the sculptor Lyngstrand, dear Hilda.

HILDA (*surprised*). Lyngstrand?

BOLETTE (*uneasy*). Has Lyngstrand been here—now, again?

ELLIDA (*with a faint smile*). Yes; he came to bring these. In honor of a birthday, you must know.

BOLETTE (*aside to HILDA*). Ah!

HILDA (*mutters*). The idiot.

WANGEL (*with painful bewilderment to ELLIDA*). H'm—yes—you see—I will tell you, my dear, good, sweet Ellida—

ELLIDA (*turning away*). Come, girls. We will put my flowers in water with the rest. (*They go up to the veranda. WANGEL slowly follows them.*)

BOLETTE (*to HILDA, in an undertone*). Oh, she is really a good-natured soul!

HILDA (*in an undertone, looking very angry*). Insinuating creature! It is only affectation, to please father.

WANGEL (*going up to the veranda and pressing ELLIDA's hand*). Thank you—thank you warmly for that, Ellida.

ELLIDA (*standing with the flower-jar*). What—should not I, too, do my share towards decorating—for—for mother's birthday?

ARNHOLM. H'm. (*He goes up to WANGEL and ELLIDA. BOLETTE and HILDA remain down in the garden.*)

ACT II.

[Up at the "*Bellevue*," a wooded height behind the town. A little way off are a belvedere and a weather-cock. Large stones adapted for seats lie round the belvedere, and in the foreground. Far away, in the background, the mouth of the fiord is seen, with islands and promontories; the open sea is not visible. It is summer twilight, with a clear orange sky over the rocky peaks far into the distance. A song in five voices is heard faintly from beyond, to the right.]

[Young people from the town, ladies and gentlemen come in couples from the right in familiar conversation, past the belvedere, and out to the left. Soon after BALLESTED comes as a guide to a party of foreign tourists and their ladies. He is loaded with shawls and traveling bags.]

BALLESTED (*pointing with his stick*). You see, gentlemen and ladies, out there lies another hill. That we will also climb and then descend. (*He goes on in English, and leads the party off to the left.*)

HILDA comes quickly up from the slope on the right, and stands looking back. Soon after BOLETTE comes by the same path.

BOLETTE. But why, my dear, should we run away from Mr. Lyngstrand?

HILDA. Because I can not endure to go so slowly up hill. Look how slowly he is coming after us.

BOLETTE. Oh, but you know how delicate he is.

HILDA. Do you believe that he's so ill?

BOLETTE. Yes, certainly I believe it.

HILDA. He was with father this afternoon. I should like to know what father thinks of him.

BOLETTE. Father told me that he had a thickening of the lungs — or something of the kind. He will not live to be old, father said.

HILDA. No! Did he say that? Only think! that is exactly as I supposed.

BOLETTE. But for God's sake, you must not show that you know it!

HILDA. Oh how can you think of such a thing. (*More gently.*) Look. Hans has dragged himself up. Hans! — Do not you fancy that you can see by his appearance that his name is Hans?

BOLETTE (*in a whisper*). Now do behave yourself. I advise you to be quiet.

LYNGSTRAND *comes up the hill with a parasol in his hand.*

LYNGSTRAND. I must beg you to excuse me, young ladies. I can not go so fast as you do.

HILDA. Have you got a parasol now?

LYNGSTRAND. It is your mother's. She said I might use it as a stick, as I had none with me.

BOLETTE. Are they still below? Father and the others?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes. Your father went for a little while into the refreshment-room, and the others are sitting outside to hear the music. But they are coming up presently, your mother says.

HILDA (*standing to look at him*). You are very tired.

LYNGSTRAND. Yes. I almost think I am, as it were, somewhat fatigued. I really believe I will sit down

for a minute or two. (*He sits down on a stone in the foreground.*)

HILDA (*standing in front of him*). Do you know that presently there is to be a dance at the Music place?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes. I heard that there was some talk of it.

HILDA. Do you take any pleasure in dancing?

BOLETTE (*who is gathering heather*). Oh, Hilda, let Mr. Lyngstrand get his breath.

LYNGSTRAND (*to HILDA*). Yes. I should like dancing very much, if only I could dance.

HILDA. Ah! Have you never learnt, then?

LYNGSTRAND. No, that I never have. But that was not what I meant. I meant that my chest will not allow of it.

HILDA. That injury which you said you had had?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes. Because of that.

HILDA. Are you very unhappy because you had that accident?

LYNGSTRAND. Oh, no. I can not say that, either. (*Smiling.*) For I believe it is the reason why everybody is so kind and friendly and good natured to me.

HILDA. And it is not dangerous?

LYNGSTRAND. No, not in the least dangerous. That your father plainly gave me to understand.

HILDA. And so you will get over it as soon as you start on your journey.

LYNGSTRAND. Oh, yes; I shall get over it.

BOLETTE (*with some flowers*). Look, Mr. Lyngstrand, you are to put these in your button-hole.

LYNGSTRAND. A thousand thanks. That is really too kind of you.

HILDA (*looking over the edge*). They are coming up by the path.

BOLETTE (*also looking over*). If only they know where to turn off. No; they are going wrong.

LYNGSTRAND (*rising*). I will run down to direct them and call to them.

HILDA. You must call very loud, then.

BOLETTE. No; it is not worth while. You will only tire yourself again.

LYNGSTRAND. Oh, it is so easy to go down hill. (*He goes out to the right.*)

HILDA. Yes; down hill—yes. (*She looks after him.*) Now he is jumping. He never thinks that he has to get up again.

BOLETTE. Poor man!

HILDA. If Lyngstrand proposed to you, would you accept him?

BOLETTE. Are you gone mad now?

HILDA. Oh, I mean, of course, supposing he were not ill. And supposing he were not likely to die—would you accept him?

BOLETTE. I think it would be better if you would have him.

HILDA. No, not I. He has no money—nothing at all. He has not even enough to live upon.

BOLETTE. Why do you go about so much with him?

HILDA. Oh, I only do so because he is so ailing.

BOLETTE. I have certainly not observed that you pity him for that.

HILDA. No, nor do I. But it is so interesting.

BOLETTE. What is?

HILDA. To look at him and make him explain that it

is not serious. And that he is going to travel and become an artist. He believes it all so firmly, and is so intensely happy over it. And yet it will never come to pass — never in this world. He will not live long enough. It seems to me quite exciting to think of it.

BOLETTE. Exciting!

HILDA. Yes, I think it exciting. I allow myself that amusement.

BOLETTE. For shame, Hilda; you are quite a horrid girl.

HILDA. So I may be. Who cares? (*She looks down.*) At last! Arnholm is not good at climbing hills. (*Turning round.*) I tell you what — do you know what I discovered about Arnholm at dinner?

BOLETTE. What?

HILDA. Only think, his hair is beginning to fall off. Here at the top of his head.

BOLETTE. Oh, nonsense! That certainly is not true.

HILDA. It is; and he has wrinkles round both eyes. Heavens, Bolette! that you should have been so much in love with him, when he used to teach you.

BOLETTE (*smiling*). Ah, can you conceive of it? I remember I shed tears of despair because he had said that he thought Bolette an ugly name.

HILDA. Yes; think of that! (*She again peeps over.*) Well, only look! Now the Lady of the Sea is chattering to him — not to father. I wonder whether those two are making love to each other.

BOLETTE. You should really be ashamed of yourself. How can you stand there and say such things about her? Now, when she is so good-natured to us.

HILDA. To be sure! Only fancy that child! No, no; there will never be any love lost between us and her. She does not get on with us in any way, nor we with her either. God knows what made father bring her into the house. I should not wonder if she were to go mad one fine day.

BOLETTE. Mad! What should make you think of such a thing?

HILDA. Oh, that would be nothing amazing. Her mother went mad. She died mad, that I know.

BOLETTE. Well, God knows what you do not poke your nose into. But hold your tongue and do not talk about it. Pray be discreet, for father's sake. Do you hear, Hilda?

WANGEL, ELLIDA, ARNHOLM and LYGSTRAND *come up from the right.*

ELLIDA (*pointing off the stage to the back*). There it lies.

ARNHOLM. Very true. It must be in that direction.

ELLIDA. There lies the sea.

BOLETTE (*to Arnholm*). Don't you think it very pretty up here?

ARNHOLM. It is grand, it seems to me. A magnificent prospect.

WANGEL. Yes. Have you never been up here before?

ARNHOLM. No, never. In my time I believe it was hardly accessible; there was no footpath up.

WANGEL. Nor any open place cleared. All that was done last year.

BOLETTE. Over there by Lodskollen the view is even grander.

WANGEL. Shall we go there, Ellida?

ELLIDA (*seating herself on a stone to the right*). Thank you, not I. But the others can go. I will sit here meanwhile.

WANGEL. Yes, and I will stay here with you. The girls may take Arnholm round.

BOLETTE. Would you like to come with us, Mr. Arnholm?

ARNHOLM. Yes, with great pleasure. Is there a good path?

BOLETTE. Oh, yes. There is a good wide path.

HILDA. The path is quite wide enough for two people to walk arm in arm.

ARNHOLM (*in jest*). Are we to believe that, little Miss Hilda? (*To BOLETTE*.) Shall we two put it to the test?

BOLETTE (*suppressing a smile*). I am willing; let us try. (*They go off to the left, arm in arm.*)

HILDA (*to LYGSTRAND*). Shall we go, too?

LYGSTRAND. Arm in arm?

HILDA. Well, why not? I am willing.

LYGSTRAND (*gives her his arm, smiling with pleasure*). This is a really comical amusement.

HILDA. Comical!

LYGSTRAND. It looks exactly as if we were engaged.

HILDA. You certainly can never have walked arm in arm with a lady before, Mr. Lyngstrand. (*They go off to the left.*)

WANGEL (*watching them from the hill top*). Dear Ellida, now that we are alone for a little while ——

ELLIDA. Yes, come and sit down by me.

WANGEL (*sitting down*). Here it is fresh and quiet. Now we can have a little talk.

ELLIDA. What about?

WANGEL. About you and our relation to each other, Ellida. I see that things can not remain as they are.

ELLIDA. What can happen to change them, do you think?

WANGEL. Perfect confidence, my dear. Our life in common — as it used to be.

ELLIDA. Oh! if it were only possible. But it is quite out of the question.

WANGEL. I believe I understand you. From certain expressions which you have let fall now and then, I think so.

ELLIDA (*vehemently*). That you do not. Do not say that you understand —

WANGEL. Indeed I do. Yours is an honest nature, Ellida. You have a faithful soul —

ELLIDA. Yes, that I have —

WANGEL. Any relationship in which you can feel yourself at ease and happy must be one of complete and entire confidence.

ELLIDA (*looks at him anxiously*). Well, what then?

WANGEL. You were not born to be a man's second wife.

ELLIDA. What has brought you to that conclusion?

WANGEL. It has often flashed through my mind as a suspicion. To-day it came upon me as certainty. The girl's memorial festival — in me you see their accomplice. Well, a man's memories can not be wiped out — mine at any rate, can not. I am not made so —

ELLIDA. That I know. Oh I know that full well.

WANGEL. But you nevertheless are mistaken. For you feel almost as though the children's mother were

still living, as though she were standing invisible among us. You believe that my mind is equally divided between you and her. It is this thought that makes you angry. You find, as it were, something immoral in our relations, and therefore you no longer can — or no longer choose to live with me as my wife.

ELLIDA. Have you seen all this, Wangel? Have you discovered all this?

WANGEL. Yes, to-day I have at last seen into the heart of the matter; to the very bottom of it.

ELLIDA. To the very bottom of it! I hardly think so.

WANGEL (*rising*). I know very well, my dear Ellida, that there is more in it than this.

ELLIDA (*alarmed*). More in it?

WANGEL. Yes. There is this: that you can not endure your surroundings here. The mountains are a weight, a burthen on your spirit; there is no light here to your eyes. The sky above you is not wide enough. There is no strength or refreshment in the breeze.

ELLIDA. In that you judge rightly. Night and day, winter and summer, it possesses me — an infinite longing for the sea.

WANGEL. I know that too, dear Ellida. (*Laying his hands on her head.*) And so this poor sick child shall go home to her own again.

ELLIDA. What do you mean by that?

WANGEL. Just what I say. We will go away.

ELLIDA. Go away?

WANGEL. To some place by the open sea — some place where you may find a true home, after your own heart.

ELLIDA. Oh, my dear Wangel, never think of such a thing. It is totally impossible. You can not live happily anywhere in the world but here.

WANGEL. That must be as it may. And besides — do you think I can live happy here without you?

ELLIDA. But here I am. And here I shall still be. You have me with you.

WANGEL. Have I really, truly, Ellida?

ELLIDA. Oh, do not talk of that other matter. Here you have all that you live and breathe for. All your work and interest are centered here.

WANGEL. That must be as it may, I tell you. We will leave the place and go elsewhere. The matter is settled irrevocably, my dear Ellida.

ELLIDA. But what do you really think we shall gain by it?

WANGEL. You will recover health and spirits.

ELLIDA. Hardly I fear. And as for you! Think of yourself, too. What will you gain?

WANGEL. I shall win you back again, my dearest.

ELLIDA. That you never can. No, no, never, Wangel! That is just what is so horrible, so dreadful to think of.

WANGEL. That we shall see. If you live amid such thoughts here, there is indeed no salvation for you but to go elsewhere. And the sooner the better. The thing is irrevocably fixed — do you hear?

ELLIDA. No, no. God knows! I would rather tell you everything — the whole truth.

- WANGEL. Yes, yes; only do that.

ELLIDA. For you shall never make yourself miserable for my sake; especially as it could do us no good.

WANGEL. I have your word now that you will tell me everything — the whole exact truth.

ELLIDA. I will tell you as well as I can. Exactly as I believe I know it; come and sit down by me. (*They sit down together on the stone.*)

WANGEL. Well, Ellida? So —

ELLIDA. The day when you came and asked whether I could and would be yours, you spoke to me quite openly and honestly about your first marriage. It had been a very happy one, you said —

WANGEL. So it was.

ELLIDA. Yes, yes; I can quite believe it, dear. It is not from any doubt that I mention it now. I only want to remind you that I on my side was equally frank with you. I told you quite unreservedly that once in my life I had loved another, and that there had been a sort of engagement between us.

WANGEL. A sort of engagement?

ELLIDA. Yes, something of the kind. Well, it was very soon at an end. He went away, and I broke it off. I told you all that.

WANGEL. But my dear Ellida why do you bring all this up again now? I really did not seriously care about it, and I never even asked who the man was.

ELLIDA. No. You never did. You have always been most considerate.

WANGEL (*smiling*). Oh, in this case — I believe I could name him myself.

ELLIDA. You could?

WANGEL. Out at Skjoldvik and in the neighborhood, there were not many among whom to choose. Or rather, to be correct, there was but one —

ELLIDA. You think, no doubt, that it was Arnholm.

WANGEL. And was it not?

ELLIDA. No.

WANGEL. Not he! Well, then indeed my penetration is at fault.

ELLIDA. Do you remember that once, late in the autumn, a large American ship put into Skjoldvik for repairs?

WANGEL. Yes, I remember it well. It was on board that ship that the captain was found one morning dead in his cabin. I myself inspected the body.

ELLIDA. Yes, you did.

WANGEL. The second mate had probably been his murderer.

ELLIDA. That no one can tell. It never came to light.

WANGEL. But there could be no doubt all the same. Why, otherwise, should he afterwards have drowned himself, as he did?

ELLIDA. He did not drown himself. He went to sea in a ship bound for the north pole.

WANGEL (*startled*). How do you know?

ELLIDA (*with conviction*). Yes, Wangel, for it was that second mate, to whom I was engaged.

WANGEL (*springing up*). What! What do you say? Is it conceivable?

ELLIDA. Yes, so it was. He was the man.

WANGEL. But in Heaven's name, Ellida, how could you fall so low? Betrothed to such a man, to a perfect stranger! What was his name?

ELLIDA. At that time he called himself Freeman; but afterwards, in letters, he signed himself as Alfred Johnston.

WANGEL. And where had he come from?

ELLIDA. From Finmark, he said. At any rate, he was born in Finland: he had been taken to Finmark as a child; by his father, I think.

WANGEL. In short, a Finland Lapp.

ELLIDA. Yes, so they call them.

WANGEL. What else did you know about him?

ELLIDA. Only that he went to sea very young, and that he had made very long voyages.

WANGEL. And nothing more?

ELLIDA. No. We never happened to talk of other things.

WANGEL. What then did you talk about?

ELLIDA. Mostly about the sea.

WANGEL. Ah, indeed! About the sea.

ELLIDA. Of storm and calm; of the dark nights on the ocean. And we talked of the sea in bright, sunny days; but most of the whales and seals and dolphins which are wont to lie on the rocks in the mid-day heat. And of the seagulls too and ospreys and other sea birds, you know. Only think, is it not strange? When we talked of such things they seemed to rise up before us, as if the sea beasts and birds were somehow akin to him.

WANGEL. And you yourself?

ELLIDA. It almost seemed as if they were akin to me too.

WANGEL. Aye, aye. And so it came about that you engaged yourself to him.

ELLIDA. Yes; he said I must.

WANGEL. Must! Had you no will of your own?

ELLIDA. Not when he was near me. Oh, afterwards it seemed to me quite incredible.

WANGEL. Were you often together?

ELLIDA. No, not so very often. One day he was on shore. He came to see the light-house, and there I made his acquaintance. After that we met now and then; but then there was that affair about the captain, and he had to go away.

WANGEL. Ah — let me hear a little more about that.

ELLIDA. It was very early, before daybreak; I had a note from him in which he said that I was to go to him at Bratthammer — you know, the headland between the light-house and Skjoldvik.

WANGEL. I know — I know it well.

ELLIDA. I was to go at once, he wrote, for he wanted to speak with me.

WANGEL. And you went?

ELLIDA. Yes. I could not help myself. Well, and he told me that he had stabbed the captain in the night.

WANGEL. He told you so himself? In so many words?

ELLIDA. Yes. But he had only done what was right and just, he said.

WANGEL. Right and just! Why, then, did he stab him?

ELLIDA. That he would not say. He said that it was not fit for me to hear.

WANGEL. And you took his bare word for it?

ELLIDA. I never thought of doing otherwise. Well, he had to go all the same. But when he took leave of me — you will never think what he did.

WANGEL. No? Let me hear then.

ELLIDA. He took a key-ring out of his pocket, and took a ring he wore off his finger; then he took a little

ring I had, and he slipped these two rings on to the key-ring. Then he said that we must both be married to the sea.

WANGEL. Married?

ELLIDA. Yes; so he said. And he threw the key-ring with the other two rings, with all his might, as far as he could into the deep.

WANGEL. And you, Ellida? - Did you consent?

ELLIDA. Why, yes. Remember, at that time I thought it must be all right. But, thank God, he soon went away!

WANGEL. And when he was far away——

ELLIDA. As you may suppose, I soon came to my senses——came to see how utterly mad and silly the whole thing had been.

WANGEL. But you spoke of some letters. You have heard from him since?

ELLIDA. Yes; I heard from him. First I had a few short lines from Arkangel. He only wrote that he was starting for America, and he told me where I could send an answer.

WANGEL. And did you write?

ELLIDA. At once. Of course I said that everything must be at an end between us, and he was to think of me no more, and that I should never think any more of him.

WANGEL. And did he, nevertheless, write again?

ELLIDA. Yes; he wrote again.

WANGEL. And what answer did he make to what you had told him?

ELLIDA. Not a single word. He wrote just as though I had not broken with him at all; quite simply and

calmly—that I was to wait for him. When he could receive me he would let me know, and then I was to set out at once.

WANGEL. So he would not release you?

ELLIDA. No. So I wrote again, almost word for word what I had written the first time, only still more strongly.

WANGEL. And then did he submit?

ELLIDA. Oh, no; do not think it. He wrote as calmly as before; not a word about my having broken with him. So I saw that it was of no use, and I never wrote to him again.

WANGEL. And never heard from him?

ELLIDA. Oh, yes; I had three letters from him after that. Once he wrote to me from California, and another time from China. The last letter I received was from Australia. He was then going to the gold mines, and since he has never let me hear of him again.

WANGEL. The man had a singular power over you,

ELLIDA. Yes, oh yes—a terrible man!

WANGEL. But you are not to think of him any more—never. Promise me that, my dear, sweet Ellida. Now we will try another cure—a fresher air than this of the fiords—the salt, keen air of the open sea. What do you say to that?

ELLIDA. Oh do not speak of it; do not think of such a thing! There is no help for me in that. I feel it only too surely—out there I could never throw it off.

WANGEL. What—— Exactly, what do you allude to, dear?

ELLIDA. That dreadful weight—that inexplicable burthen on my spirit—

WANGEL. But you *have* thrown it off. Long ago. When you broke off the engagement, and that is long since past.

ELLIDA (*starting up*). No, it is not so, it is not so!

WANGEL. Not past and gone?

ELLIDA. No Wangel. It is not gone! And I fear that it never will be. Not in this life.

WANGEL (*coldly*). Do you mean to say that in your heart of hearts you never can cease to think of this stranger?

ELLIDA. I have ceased to think of him. But suddenly I felt as though he had come back again.

WANGEL. How long ago was that?

ELLIDA. I first felt it about three years since, or rather more. It was when I was expecting my baby.

WANGEL. Oh, at that time! Ah, Ellida, I am beginning to see my way in several things.

ELLIDA. You are on the wrong track. The thing which came upon me—I believe that never in this world can it be explained.

WANGEL (*looking at her distressfully*). To think—that for three whole years you have lived loving another man. Another man. Not me, but another.

ELLIDA. Ah, you are wrong, quite wrong. I love no man but you.

WANGEL (*gloomily*). Then why all this time have you not chosen to live with me as a wife should.

ELLIDA. On account of that horror—about that stranger.

WANGEL. A horror?

ELLIDA. Aye, a horror so dreadful—such as the sea alone can have. For I must tell you, Wangel—

The young people from the town pass back from the left, bowing and going off to the right. With them come ARNHOLM, BOLETTE, HILDA and LYGSTRAND.

BOLETTE (*as she goes past*). Well, you are still lingering up here.

ELLIDA. Yes, it is so cool and pleasant at this height.

ARNHOLM. We for our part are going down to the dance.

WANGEL. That is right, that is right. We shall soon come down too.

HILDA. Au revoir.

ELLIDA. Mr. Lyngstrand — oh, wait a minute.

LYGSTRAND *stays*. ARNHOLM, BOLETTE and HILDA *go off, right*.

ELLIDA (*to LYGSTRAND*). Are you going to dance, too?

LYGSTRAND. No, Mrs. Wangel, I believe I dare not.

ELLIDA. Well, it is best to be prudent. That attack on your chest — you have never quite got over it.

LYGSTRAND. Never quite; no.

ELLIDA (*hesitating a little*). How long is it since you made that voyage?

LYGSTRAND. When I was shipwrecked?

ELLIDA. Yes, the voyage of which you were telling me this morning.

LYGSTRAND. It must be about — wait; yes, it must be at least three years.

ELLIDA. Ah! three years.

LYGSTRAND. Or rather more. We sailed from America in February; we were shipwrecked in March. We were caught in the equinoctial storms.

ELLIDA (*looks at WANGEL*). It was at that time of year?

WANGEL. But, my dear Ellida —

ELLIDA. Well, do not let us detain you, Mr. Lyngstrand. Pray go — only do not dance.

LYNGSTRAND. No, only look on. (*He goes off to the right.*)

WANGEL. Dear Ellida, what made you ask about his voyage?

ELLIDA. Johnston was on the same ship. Of that I am certain.

WANGEL. From what do you infer that?

ELLIDA (*without answering*). It was while he was on board that he came to know that I had married another man, during his absence. And so—it was in that same hour that it fell upon me.

WANGEL. This horror?

ELLIDA. Suddenly I see him standing before me as if he were alive — or rather, a little on one side of me. He never looks at me; he only is there.

WANGEL. And what does he look like?

ELLIDA. Just as I last saw him.

WANGEL. Ten years ago?

ELLIDA. Yes; out on Bratthammer. What I see most clearly is his breast-pin, with a large blue-tinted pearl; that pearl is like a dead fish's eye and seems to stare at me.

WANGEL. Good heavens! you are more ill than I thought — more ill than you yourself are aware of, Ellida.

ELLIDA. Yes, yes; help me, save me if you can, for I feel that it is closing in on me more and more.

WANGEL. And you have been going about in this state for more than three years; have carried this secret misery about with you and never confessed it to me?

ELLIDA. I could not. Not till now, when I was compelled to it, for your sake; for if I had told you all, I must also have told you the unspeakable ——

WANGEL. The unspeakable ——?

ELLIDA. No, no; do not ask me. Only one thing and then nothing more. Wangel, how can you explain it—the mysterious fact that the child's eyes ——

WANGEL. My own dear Ellida, I assure you that it was pure imagination on your part. The child had eyes exactly like those of any other child.

ELLIDA. No; it had not. You could not see it, but the child's eyes changed in color with the sea. If the fiords lay still in the sunshine, his eyes looked like them, and so in stormy weather. Oh, I saw it, though you saw it not.

WANGEL (*giving in to her*). Well—perhaps so. But even if it were. What then?

ELLIDA (*in a low voice to him*). I had seen such eyes before.

WANGEL. What? And where?

ELLIDA. Out on Bratthammer, ten years ago.

WANGEL (*starting back*). What do you mean?

ELLIDA (*whispers trembling*). The child had that man's eyes.

WANGEL (*involuntarily shrieks*). Ellida!

ELLIDA (*throwing up her hands in despair and clasping them over her head*). Now do you understand why I never again will—or ought to live with you as your wife? (*She turns quickly away and flies down the hill to the right.*)

WANGEL (*hurries after her shouting*). Ellida, Ellida, my poor unhappy Ellida!

ACT III.

[*A remote part of Dr. Wangel's garden. It is damp and marshy, and shaded by large old trees. To the right is the bank of a weedy pond. A low railing divides the garden from a foot-way and the fiord. In the distance cliffs and hills beyond the fiord. It is late in the afternoon, almost dusk.*]

[*BOLETTE is sitting on a stone bench to the left; books and a work-basket are lying on the bench; HILDA and LYGSTRAND, with fish-baskets, are walking on the bank of the pond.*]

HILDA (*signing to LYGSTRAND*). Stand still. I see a big one.

LYGSTRAND (*looking in*). Where is he?

HILDA (*pointing*). Can't you see? Down there. And look there. Hang me if there is not another! (*she looks out between the trees*). What a bore! Here he comes to stop our fun.

BOLETTE (*looking up*). Who comes?

HILDA. Your professor, old girl.

BOLETTE. Mine?

HILDA. Well, heaven knows he never was mine.

PROFESSOR ARNHOLM *comes from among the trees on the right.*

ARNHOLM. Are there any fish left in the pond?

HILDA. Yes, some very old carp.

ARNHOLM. What, are the old carp alive still?

HILDA. Yes; they are tough customs. But we mean to see if we can not do something with them.

ARNHOLM. You should rather try your skill out on the fiord.

LYNGSTRAND. No; the pond is more mysterious, as I may say.

HILDA. Yes; here it is more exciting. Have you been in the sea?

ARNHOLM. Just now. I have come straight from the bath-house.

HILDA. Then you bathed in the swimming bath?

ARNHOLM. Yes; I am no great swimmer.

HILDA. Can you swim on your back?

ARNHOLM. No.

HILDA. I can. (*To LYNGSTRAND.*) Let us try over there on the other side. (*They go along the bank to the right.*)

ARNHOLM (*going up to BOLETTE*). Sitting here alone, Bolette?

BOLETTE. Oh, yes; I generally do.

ARNHOLM. Is not your mother down in the garden?

BOLETTE. No. She is no doubt gone for a walk with father.

ARNHOLM. How is she this afternoon?

BOLETTE. I do not exactly know. I forgot to inquire.

ARNHOLM. What are the books you have there?

BOLETTE. Oh, one is something about botany, and the other a description of the earth.

ARNHOLM. Do you like such reading?

BOLETTE. Yes, when I can find time for it. But first and foremost I have to attend to the housekeeping.

ARNHOLM. Does not your mother — your stepmother, help you in that?

BOLETTE. No, it is my care. I had to manage it for two years — while father was alone; and then it went on just the same.

ARNHOLM. But you still have a great love for reading.

BOLETTE. Yes, I read such useful books as I can get hold of. I should like to know a little about the world, for here we live so completely out of all that is going on — almost, that is to say.

ARNHOLM. My dear Bolette, do not say that.

BOLETTE. But it is so. <It seems to me we live hardly differently from the carp in the pond there. The fiord is so close at hand, and the great free fish swim in and out of it, but the poor tame pond-fish know nothing of it at all. >

ARNHOLM. I do not believe they would be any better off if they were to slip out.

BOLETTE. Oh, that I should fancy would not matter.

ARNHOLM. And indeed, you can not say that you live so utterly out of the world here. Not during the summer at any rate. This is just now a sort of rendezvous of the fashionable world, almost a center — at any rate for a short while.

BOLETTE (*smiling*). Oh, yes. You yourself, who are only here for a short while, may find it easy enough to make fun of us.

ARNHOLM. To make fun of you! What makes you say that?

BOLETTE. Why, all that about a rendezvous and center of fashion is something you heard the towns-people say. They often say such things.

ARNHOLM. Yes, to be frank, I have observed that.

BOLETTE. But there is not really a word of truth in it; not for us who always live here. What good does it do us that the great, strange world should come through the place on its way to stare at the midnight sun? We have nothing to do with it. We never go to see any midnight sun. Oh, no; we must live on in our pond, as the carp do in theirs.

ARNHOLM (*sitting down by her*). Tell me, dear Bolette, is it so much some vague this or that which you long for, as some one particular thing?

BOLETTE. Oh, very likely.

ARNHOLM. And what, then, is this one particular thing? What is it that you long for?

BOLETTE. I long most to get away.

ARNHOLM. That first and foremost?

BOLETTE. And, next, to be able to learn more. Above all things to know something thoroughly.

ARNHOLM. At the time when I was teaching you, your father often said you should have time for study.

BOLETTE. Yes—poor father! He says a great many things. But when it comes to the point—there is no real determination in father.

ARNHOLM. No, more's the pity; you are right in that; there is not. But have you at any time talked the matter over with him, seriously and earnestly?

BOLETTE. No, I never did, I confess.

ARNHOLM. But you know you really ought to do so; before it is too late, Bolette. Why do you not?

BOLETTE. Oh, perhaps because there is no real determination in me either, I believe. In that I certainly take after my father.

ARNHOLM. H'm — unless you are doing yourself an injustice.

BOLETTE. No, unfortunately I am not. And father has so little time for thinking of me and my future ; and little care for it either. He puts such matters aside whenever he can. He is so taken up with Ellida ——

ARNHOLM. With whom — what ?

BOLETTE. I mean that he and my step-mother (*she interrupts herself*). My father and she live so entirely for each other, as you can imagine ——

ARNHOLM. Well then, it would be all the better if you were to go away from the place.

BOLETTE. Yes; but I do not fancy I have any right to do so — to leave my father.

ARNHOLM. But, dear Bolette, you will be obliged to part from him some day. Therefore, as it seems to me, the sooner the better.

BOLETTE. Perhaps there is nothing else to be done. I must think of myself too, and try to put myself in a better position. After father's death I should have no one I could cling to. But my poor father — I should dread to leave him.

ARNHOLM. Dread it ?

BOLETTE. Yes; for his sake.

ARNHOLM. But bless me, is not your stepmother there ? She will remain with him.

BOLETTE. Yes, that is true. But she is not clever in all the things which my mother could do so well. There are so many things which she does not even see — or perhaps does not want to see — or will not be troubled about. I do not know which to ascribe it to.

ARNHOLM. H'm—I think I understand what you mean.

BOLETTE. And my poor father—he is weak in many points. You have noticed it yourself, I dare say. He has not practice enough to fill up all his time, and she is so utterly incapable of being his mainstay—for that, however, he is, no doubt, somewhat to blame.

ARNHOLM. Why do you think that?

BOLETTE. Father always likes to see bright faces about him. There should be sunshine and contentment in the house, he says; and so I fancy he often lets her doctor herself in a way which is not good for her in the end.

ARNHOLM. Do you really think so?

BOLETTE. Yes, I can not help thinking so. She is often so very strange. But is it not monstrous that I should be obliged to remain here at home? It is not of any real use to my father, and I have some duties towards myself, it seems to me.

ARNHOLM. I tell you what, dear Bolette, we must discuss this matter more fully.

BOLETTE. Oh, that will be of no great use. I suspect that I was born to live here, like the carp in the pond.

ARNHOLM. Certainly not. It depends entirely on yourself.

BOLETTE (*eagerly*). Do you say so?

ARNHOLM. Yes, believe me. It rests entirely in your own hands.

BOLETTE. Oh, would it were true! Perhaps you would put in a good word for me to father.

ARNHOLM. That too. But first I must say a few frank and unreserved words to you yourself, dear

Bolette. (*Glancing to the left.*) Hush! make no sign; we will return to the subject presently.

ELLIDA comes from the left. She wears no hat, but only a large handkerchief thrown over her head and shoulders.

ELLIDA (*with restless vehemence*). Here it is pleasant — delightful.

ARNHOLM (*rising*). Have you been out for a walk?

ELLIDA. Yes; a long, long, beautiful walk with Wangel, and now we are going for a sail.

BOLETTE. Will you sit down?

ELLIDA. No thanks; I do not want to sit.

BOLETTE (*making room on the bench*). Here is a nice place.

ELLIDA (*walking about*). No, no, no; I will not sit — not sit.

ARNHOLM. Your walk has certainly done you good; you look quite revived.

ELLIDA. Oh, I am wonderfully well. I feel so unspeakably happy, so safe — so safe. (*Looking out to the left.*) What is that large steam-packet coming in?

BOLETTE (*rises and looks out*). It must be the great English steamer.

ARNHOLM. It is lying too by the buoy. Does it usually remain there?

BOLETTE. Only for half an hour; then it goes further up the fiord.

ELLIDA. And then down again, to-morrow; out to the great open sea. Away over the wide ocean. Think what it would be to go, too. If one could—if only one could!

ARNHOLM. Have you never made a long sea voyage, Mrs. Wangel?

ELLIDA. Never, never; only short excursions here in the fiord.

BOLETTE (*with a sigh*). No; we must make the best of the dry land.

ARNHOLM. Well, that, at any rate, is our home.

ELLIDA. No; I do not think that it is.

ARNHOLM. Not that the dry land is our home?

ELLIDA. No; I do not believe it. I believe that, supposing men had from the first accustomed themselves to live on the sea—in the sea, even, who knows—we should be very much more perfect than we are, better and happier.

ARNHOLM. Do you really think so?

ELLIDA. Yes, and I should like to know if it would not be so? I have talked it over with Wangel many times.

ARNHOLM. Well—and he——

ELLIDA. He thinks it may perhaps be true.

ARNHOLM (*in jest*). Well, be it so. Things are as they are. But we once for all started on the wrong track, and are land-creatures and not sea-creatures. Under all the circumstances it is certainly too late now to set it right.

ELLIDA. Yes; that is a melancholy truth. But I believe that mankind have some suspicions of the fact, and go about bearing a secret pain and grief. Take my word for it, it is the deep-seated cause of man's dejection. Yes, you may take my word for it.

ARNHOLM. But, dear Mrs. Wangel, it has never struck me that the human race are so dejected after all. I

fancy, on the contrary, that most of us look on life as pleasant and easy—with great, silent, unconscious joy.

ELLIDA. Oh, no. It is not so. That joy is like our joy in the long light of a summer day. It is clouded by our foreknowledge of coming darkness. Just such foreknowledge casts a shadow over human joys, as the clouds cast their shadows over the fiord. There it lies shining and blue, and then all at once——

BOLETTE. You should not give way to such dismal thoughts. Just now you were so gay and bright——

ELLIDA. Yes. I was, I was. Oh! it is so stupid of me (*looking about her uneasily*). If only Wangel would come. He promised me so faithfully that he would. But yet he does not come. Oh, dear Professor, would you try to find him for me?

ARNHOLM. With pleasure.

ELLIDA. You do not understand. When he is not before me I can not always remember what he is like, and I feel as if I had quite lost him. It is so dreadful. Only go. (*She walks towards the pool.*)

BOLETTE (*to ARNHOLM*). I will go with you. You will not know.

ARNHOLM. Oh, I shall soon find him.

BOLETTE (*aside*). No, no. I am uneasy. I fear he may have gone on board the steamship.

ARNHOLM. You fear it?

BOLETTE. Yes. He very often goes to see if he has friends on board. And there is a refreshment room on board——

ARNHOLM. Ah! Well, come then.

He goes off with BOLETTE to the left. ELLIDA stands staring into the pond. Now and then she speaks a few incoherent words to herself. Outside the fence, along the footpath, a STRANGER is seen coming from the left; he is in traveling dress; his beard and hair are bushy and red. He wears a Scotch cap and carries a traveling bag.

The STRANGER walks slowly along by the fence, looking into the garden. On perceiving ELLIDA he stops, looks at her fixedly, and says in a low tone :

THE STRANGER. Good evening, Ellida.

ELLIDA (*turning round, cries out.*) Ah, my darling — are you come at last?

STRANGER. Yes. At last!

ELLIDA (*looking at him in surprise and alarm.*) Who are you? Do you want any one here?

STRANGER. You may surely suppose so.

ELLIDA (*amazed*). What is this? Why do you address me? Whom do you seek?

STRANGER. I seek you alone.

ELLIDA (*startled*). Ah! (*She gazes at him, totters, and utters a half-suppressed scream.*) Those eyes, those eyes!

STRANGER. You know me at last, then? I knew you at once, Ellida.

ELLIDA. Those eyes! Do not look at me so. I shall scream for help.

STRANGER. Nay, hush; do not be frightened. I shall do you no harm.

ELLIDA (*covering her eyes with her hands*). Do not look at me so, I tell you.

STRANGER (*resting his arms on the fence*). I came by the English packet.

ELLIDA (*steals a glance at the STRANGER*). What do you want of me?

STRANGER. I promised you I would come back as soon as I could.

ELLIDA. Go away — travel again. Never come here — never more. I wrote to you that all was at an end between us — everything; and you know it.

STRANGER (*unmoved*). I would gladly have come sooner, but I could not. Now, at last, I am here. You see me at last, Ellida.

ELLIDA. What do you want of me? What do you mean to do? What have you come here for?

STRANGER. You must know that I have come to fetch you.

ELLIDA (*starting back in horror*). To fetch me! Is that your purpose.

STRANGER. Why, of course.

ELLIDA. But you surely must know that I am married.

STRANGER. Yes, I know that.

ELLIDA. And yet — and yet — you have come to fetch me?

STRANGER. Yes, I have.

ELLIDA (*clasps her hands on her head*). Oh this is dreadful. This is horrible — horrible!

STRANGER. You do not mean to come perhaps?

ELLIDA (*distraught*). Do not look at me like that.

STRANGER. I ask if you mean to come?

ELLIDA. No, no, no. I will not. Never, never. I will not, I say. I neither can, nor will. (*More quickly*.) I could not.

STRANGER (*springs over the fence into the garden*). Well, well, Ellida. Only let me say one thing before I go.

ELLIDA (*tries to fly but can not. She stands as if stricken with fear, and totters against a tree-trunk by the pool*). Do not touch me! Do not come near me! No nearer—do not touch me, I say.

STRANGER (*approaching her cautiously*). You need not be so much afraid of me, Ellida.

ELLIDA (*covering her eyes with her hands*). Do not look at me so!

STRANGER. Do not be frightened—do not be afraid. (DR. WANGEL comes into the garden from the left.)

WANGEL (*still among the trees*). Well, you have indeed waited for me a long time.

ELLIDA (*rushing to him and clings to his arm screaming*). Oh Wangel, save me—save me if you can.

WANGEL. Ellida, what in God's name——

ELLIDA. Save me—do you not see him? There he stands.

WANGEL (*looks round*). That man? (*He goes towards him.*) May I ask who are you? And why you have come into this garden?

STRANGER. I want to speak to her (*points at ELLIDA*).

WANGEL. Indeed! It is you, then——(*turning to ELLIDA*). I heard that a stranger had been inquiring for you.

STRANGER. Yes, that was I.

WANGEL. And what do you want with my wife (*to ELLIDA*). Do you know him, Ellida.

ELLIDA (*wringing her hands*). Do I know him? Yes, yes, yes.

WANGEL (*sternly*). What!

ELLIDA. It is he—he himself—of whom I told you —

WANGEL. What is that you say? (*He turns to the STRANGER.*) Are you that fellow Johnston, who formerly —

STRANGER. Well—you may call me Johnston, for anything I care. But that is not my name.

WANGEL. It is not?

STRANGER. It is no longer my name.

WANGEL. Then, what can you want of my wife? For you know that the light-house officer's daughter has long been married. And the man she married you see before you.

STRANGER. I have known that these three years and more.

ELLIDA (*agitated*). How did you know that?

STRANGER. I was on the way home to you when an old newspaper fell into my hands. It was printed in these parts and there I saw news of your betrothal.

ELLIDA (*gazing into vacancy*). Of my betrothal—it was that, then —

STRANGER. It took me by surprise; for that throwing of the rings—that too was a betrothal, Ellida.

ELLIDA (*clasping her hands over her face*). Ah! —

WANGEL. How dare you?

STRANGER. Had you forgotten that?

ELLIDA (*conscious of his gaze, exclaims*). Do not look at me like that.

WANGEL (*confronting him*). You are to address yourself to me and not to her. And now, once for all, as you know that, what is your business here? Why have you come to seek out my wife?

STRANGER. I had promised Ellida to come back for her as soon as I could.

WANGEL. *Ellida* — again!

STRANGER. And Ellida had promised me faithfully to wait for me till I should come.

WANGEL. I perceive that you know my wife by her Christian name. Such familiarity is not customary here.

STRANGER. I know that very well; but as she was mine before she was yours —

WANGEL. Yours! God forbid!

ELLIDA (*getting behind WANGEL*). Oh! He will never let me go!

WANGEL. Yours — you say she was yours?

STRANGER. Has she never told you about certain rings — two rings — mine and Ellida's?

WANGEL. Yes, she told me. But what then? She put an end to the affair afterwards. You had her letters. You yourself know that.

STRANGER. Both Ellida and I were agreed that the casting of the rings should be as valid and binding as though it were a formal betrothal.

ELLIDA. But I will never be yours. Never, never will I have anything more to do with you. Do not look at me so — I will not, I tell you.

WANGEL. You must be a madman to think that you can come here and base your rights on such childish folly.

STRANGER. Very true. Rights, in the sense you give the word, I have none.

WANGEL. What then do you want? You surely do not imagine that you can take her from me by force, against her own will!

STRANGER. No. What should I gain by that? If Ellida will come with me, it must be of her own free will.

ELLIDA (*cried out*). My own free will!

WANGEL. Could you dream of such a thing?

ELLIDA (*to herself*). Of my own free will.

WANGEL. You must be out of your mind. Go your way. We have nothing more to say to each other.

STRANGER (*looking at his watch*). It will soon be time for me to go on board again. (*He comes nearer.*) I have done my duty, Ellida. (*Coming closer still.*) I have kept the word I gave you.

ELLIDA (*beseechingly and shrinking from him*). Ah! do not touch me!

STRANGER. You have till to-morrow night to think of it.

WANGEL. There is nothing for her to think about. Now go! Be off!

STRANGER (*still to ELLIDA*). I am going up the fiord with the ship. To-morrow night I will come again; I will look for you here; you must wait for me in the garden; for I should prefer to speak with you alone, you understand.

ELLIDA (*trembling, in a low voice*). Oh, Wangel, you hear that!

WANGEL. Only be calm; we will find means of preventing this visit.

STRANGER. Till then, adieu, Ellida. Till to-morrow night.

ELLIDA (*beseechingly*). Oh, no, no. Do not come to-morrow night. Never, never come again!

STRANGER. And if you should have made up your mind to come with me over the sea——

ELLIDA. Ah! do not look at me so!

STRANGER. I only mean that if so, you must be ready to start——

WANGEL. Go indoors, Ellida.

ELLIDA. I can not—oh, help me, save me, Wangel!

STRANGER. For you must reflect that, if you do not set out with me to-morrow, it is an end of everything.

ELLIDA (*looking at him timidly*). An end of everything. Forever? ——

STRANGER. Nothing can ever be done to alter it. I shall never come to these shores again. You will never see me more nor hear of me either. I shall be as one dead and gone from you forever.

ELLIDA (*breathing hard*). Oh! ——

STRANGER. So think well of what you do. Good night. (*He springs over the fence and stands there to say*) Yes, Ellida. Be ready to set out to-morrow night — I shall come to fetch you. (*He slowly and calmly goes down the path to the right.*)

ELLIDA (*gazes after him a minute or two*). Of my own free will, did he say? Only think—he said I should go with him of my own free will.

WANGEL. Only be reasonable. Now he is gone, and you shall never see him again.

ELLIDA. Oh, how can you say that? He is coming again to-morrow night.

WANGEL. Let him come. You, at any rate, he shall not see.

ELLIDA (*shaking her head*). Oh, Wangel, never think that you can prevent him.

WANGEL. My dear, trust me for that.

ELLIDA (*musings, without hearing him*). When he has been here—to-morrow night—and when he is gone across the sea in the steamship ——

WANGEL. Well, what then?

ELLIDA. I should like to know whether he never — really never will come again?

WANGEL. Never, dear Ellida, on that point you may be quite easy. What further business could he have here? Now that he has heard from your own lips that you positively will have nothing to say to him, that is an end to the matter.

ELLIDA (*to herself*). To-morrow, then, or never.

WANGEL. Or, if he should venture to come here again ——

ELLIDA (*eagerly*). What then?

WANGEL. Then it stands in our power to make him harmless.

ELLIDA. I do not believe it.

WANGEL. It stands in our power, I tell you. If you can have no peace from him by any other means, he shall be brought to justice for murdering the captain.

ELLIDA (*vehemently*). No, no, no; never that. We know nothing of the murder — nothing whatever.

WANGEL. Do we not; did he not himself confess it to you?

ELLIDA. No, nothing about it; and if you say anything of the kind I shall deny it. Put him in prison! Never! He belongs to the open sea; that is his place.

WANGEL (*looking at her and speaking slowly*). Ah, Ellida, Ellida!

ELLIDA (*clinging to him passionately*). Ah, you are good and faithful; save me from that man.

WANGEL (*quietly releasing himself*). Come! Come with me.

LYNGSTRAND and HILDA, *with fishing rods, come from the right towards the pond.*

LYNGSTRAND (*going eagerly up to ELLIDA*). Mrs. Wangel, you must hear the most wonderful thing!

WANGEL. What is that?

LYNGSTRAND. Only think—we have seen the American

WANGEL. The American?

HILDA. Yes; and I saw him too.

LYNGSTRAND. He went past the garden, and on board the big English steamer.

WANGEL. When and where did you know the man?

LYNGSTRAND. I once went to sea with him. I felt so sure he had been drowned, and I met him again here, safe and sound.

WANGEL. Do you know anything more about him?

LYNGSTRAND. No; but he is no doubt come to be revenged on his faithless maid.

WANGEL. What is that you say?

HILDA. Mr. Lyngstrand means to use him in his great work of art.

WANGEL. I do not understand a word of all this——

ELLIDA. I will tell you all presently.

ARNHOLM and BOLETTE *come up the path outside the garden, from the left.*

BOLETTE (*to those in the garden*). Come and see. The big English steamer is going up the fiord (*the steamship glides across in the distance*).

LYNGSTRAND (*to HILDA, by the fence*). He will carry her off to-night, no doubt.

HILDA (*nodding*). The faithless girl — no doubt.

LYNGSTRAND. At about midnight, do you think?

HILDA. It seems to me most exciting.

ELLIDA (*watching the vessel*). So to-morrow —

WANGEL. And never again.

ELLIDA (*in a low tone and trembling*). Oh Wangel, save me from myself.

WANGEL (*looking at her anxiously*). Ellida, I can not but think that there is something behind all this.

ELLIDA. Behind it there is the attraction —

WANGEL. The attraction?

ELLIDA. The man draws me to him, as the sea does.
(*She goes slowly, lost in thought, through the garden to the left. WANGEL keeping close to her, very uneasy, and watching her narrowly.*)

ACT IV.

[*DR. WANGEL'S room opening on the garden. Doors to the right and left; in the back-ground, between two windows, there is a glass door open on to the veranda and the garden beyond. In front, to the left, a table and a sofa; to the right a pianoforte, and farther back a clump of plants. In the middle a round table with chairs round it. A rose-bush in blossom stands on the table and three plants in pots. It is before noon. To the left sits BOLETTE on the sofa by the table, at work on some embroidery. LYGSTRAND on a chair at the other side of the table. BALLESTED is seen in the garden, painting. HILDA stands by him looking at him.*]

LYGSTRAND (*with his arms on the table, after sitting in silence for some minutes watching BOLETTE at work*). It must be very difficult to work such a pattern as that, Miss Wangel.

BOLETTE. Oh, no. Not so very difficult. You need only count accurately.

LYGSTRAND. Count? Do you have to count?

BOLETTE. Yes, the stitches, look here.

LYGSTRAND. To be sure. Only think—so it is almost an art. Can you draw, too?

BOLETTE. Oh, yes, when I have something to copy.

LYGSTRAND. Not otherwise?

BOLETTE. No, not otherwise.

LYNGSTRAND. That is not really art.

BOLETTE. No, it is chiefly handicraft.

LYNGSTRAND. But, I think, you might perhaps learn an art.

BOLETTE. Though I have so little talent; do you think so?

LYNGSTRAND. Certainly; if you were constantly in the society of a true artist —

BOLETTE. Do you think I might learn from him?

LYNGSTRAND. Not learn in the ordinary way. But I think it would grow in you little by little. By a sort of miracle, Miss Wangel.

BOLETTE. That would indeed be a miracle.

LYNGSTRAND (*after a pause*). Have you ever thought seriously — I mean have you ever thought deeply and earnestly of marriage, Miss Wangel.

BOLETTE (*glancing up at him*). No.

LYNGSTRAND. I have.

BOLETTE. Indeed — have you?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes, indeed. I think very often of such things. Chiefly of marriage; and I have read about it in various books. < It seems to me that marriage must be regarded very much as a miracle > The wife becomes gradually transformed more and more till she resembles her husband.

BOLETTE. In their interests, you mean?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes, quite so.

BOLETTE. Well, but his gifts, his talents or acquired skill —

LYNGSTRAND. To be sure; I should like to know whether in those too —

BOLETTE. Then perhaps you think that what a man

has read—or thought—can, as it were, pass into his wife?

LYNGSTRAND. That, too—yes; little by little. As by a miracle. But I see clearly enough that this can only happen in a marriage which is faithful and loving and really happy.

BOLETTE. Has it never occurred to you that a man may be influenced in the same way by his wife; grow like her, I mean?

LYNGSTRAND. A man? No, that I never thought of.

BOLETTE. But why not one as much as the other?

LYNGSTRAND. Because a man has his calling to live for. And that is what makes a man firm and strong, Miss Wangel. He has a vocation in life.

BOLETTE. Has every man a vocation?

LYNGSTRAND. Oh, no. I was thinking especially of artists.

BOLETTE. Do you think that it is right in an artist to get married?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes, it seems so to me. When he can find some one whom he truly loves——

BOLETTE. Even then, I think, he had better live for his art alone.

LYNGSTRAND. That he ought. But he can do so just as well even if he is married.

BOLETTE. Does she think so?

LYNGSTRAND. She? Who?

BOLETTE. She whom he may marry. What is she to live for?

LYNGSTRAND. She too must live for his art. I fancy that a woman might feel herself thoroughly happy under such conditions.

BOLETTE. H'm — I am not sure.

LYNGSTRAND. Indeed, Miss Wangel, you may take my word for it. It is not merely the honor and distinction which she gets on his account, for that, I suppose, is the last thing to be thought of. But that she can help him in his work, that she can lighten his labors by being near him, and caring for him, and making life easy and pleasant to him — It seems to me that this might make a woman very happy.

BOLETTE. Ah! You have no idea yourself how selfish you are.

LYNGSTRAND. I selfish? Well, good heavens! But if you only knew me a little better than you do. (*Leaning over closer to her.*) Miss Wangel, when I am gone — and I must go very soon —

BOLETTE (*very sympathetically*). Do not think of anything so melancholy.

LYNGSTRAND. It does not strike me as so very melancholy —

BOLETTE. Why, what do you mean?

LYNGSTRAND. In about a month I shall be leaving this, and then going to the south of Europe.

BOLETTE. Oh, yes, to be sure — of course.

LYNGSTRAND. And you will sometimes think of me?

BOLETTE. Yes, I shall indeed.

LYNGSTRAND (*with pleasure*). You promise me you will.

BOLETTE. Yes, that I promise.

LYNGSTRAND. On your solemn word of honor?

BOLETTE. On my solemn word of honor. (*More lightly.*) But what does it matter after all! It can lead to nothing in the world.

LYNGSTRAND. How can you say that? To me it will be the joy of my life to know that you, here at home, are thinking of me.

BOLETTE. Well, but what then?

LYNGSTRAND. What then — I do not exactly know.

BOLETTE. Nor I neither. There is so much in the way; everything is in the way, I think.

LYNGSTRAND. Oh, another miracle might happen. A happy turn of fortune — or something of the kind. For I believe that fortune is on my side.

BOLETTE (*eagerly*). Yes, indeed. Cling to that belief.

LYNGSTRAND. I do believe it firmly. And so, some years hence, when I come home again a famous sculptor, well-to-do, and in good health——

BOLETTE. To be sure. We will hope for that.

LYNGSTRAND. You may hope for it confidently, if you only think of me constantly and faithfully while I am away in the south. And I have your word that you will.

BOLETTE. You have (*shaking her head*). But it will come to nothing, nevertheless.

LYNGSTRAND. Still, Miss Wangel, it will at least lead to this: that I shall work with a lighter heart, and get on all the faster in my art.

BOLETTE. Do you really think so?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes, I feel it deeply. And it seems to me that it must be an encouragement to you, too — here in this retired spot — to know in your heart that you are helping me to work

BOLETTE (*looking at him*). But you — on your part?

LYNGSTRAND. I?

BOLETTE (*looking off into the garden*). Hush! Speak of something else. Here comes the professor.

ARNHOLM *is seen in the garden to the left. He is talking with BALLESTED and HILDA.*

LYNGSTRAND. Are you much attached to your old tutor, Miss Wangel?

BOLETTE. Much attached to him?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes — are you fond of him, I mean?

BOLETTE. Oh, yes, very; for he is a very good friend and adviser, and he is always ready to be helpful when he can.

LYNGSTRAND. Is it not strange that he should never have married?

BOLETTE. Does it strike you as strange?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes, for he's well-to-do, they say.

BOLETTE. He must be. Still, I can imagine that he may not have found it easy to meet with anyone who would marry him.

LYNGSTRAND. Why so?

BOLETTE. Oh, he has been the teacher of almost all the young girls he has ever known. That he says himself.

LYNGSTRAND. But what has that to do with it?

BOLETTE. Why, good gracious, a man does not marry a girl whose tutor he has been.

LYNGSTRAND. Do you think a young girl could never love her tutor?

BOLETTE. Not after she is grown up.

LYNGSTRAND. No! Do you mean that?

BOLETTE (*in a warning tone*). Hush, take care.

BALLESTED *has meanwhile collected his things and carries them out through the garden to the right. HILDA helps him. ARNHOLM comes up to the veranda and into the room.*

ARNHOLM. Good morning, dear Bolette. Good morning Mr.—Mr.— (He looks annoyed and bows coldly to LYGSTRAND. LYGSTRAND rises and bows.)

BOLETTE (*goes to meet ARNHOLM*). Good morning, Mr. Professor.

ARNHOLM. How are you this morning?

BOLETTE. Thank you, very well.

ARNHOLM. Is your mother gone to her bath to-day?

BOLETTE. No, she is up in her room.

ARNHOLM. Not quite well?

BOLETTE. I do not know. She has locked herself in.

ARNHOLM. Has she indeed?

LYGSTRAND. Mrs. Wangel was dreadfully upset by the American yesterday.

ARNHOLM. What do you know about it?

LYGSTRAND. I told Mrs. Wangel that I had seen him alive and in the flesh behind the garden.

ARNHOLM. Oh, that was it?

BOLETTE (*to ARNHOLM*). You and papa stayed out very late last night.

ARNHOLM. Yes, somewhat late. We were talking over serious business.

BOLETTE. Did you say anything to him about me and my affairs?

ARNHOLM. No, dear Bolette. I had not the chance. He was so much absorbed by another matter.

BOLETTE (*sighing*). Ah, yes! He always is.

ARNHOLM (*with great sympathy*). But by and by we will discuss the subject. Where is your father now? Not at home, I suppose?

BOLETTE. No. He must be down at the office. I will go and fetch him.

ARNHOLM. No, thanks; do not do that. I would rather go down there to him.

BOLETTE (*listening out to the left*). Wait a minute, professor. I think that is father's step on the stairs. Yes — He has no doubt been to see her.

Dr. WANGEL comes in through the door on the left.

WANGEL (*holding out his hand to ARNHOLM*). Well, my dear friend, so here you are already. It is kind of you to have come so early, for I want some further talk with you.

BOLETTE (*to LYGSTRAND*). Shall we go to Hilda in the garden?

LYGSTRAND. Yes, with great pleasure. (*He and BOLETTE go into the garden, and off among the trees in the background.*)

ARNHOLM (*as he follows them with his eyes, turn to WANGEL*). Do you know anything about that young man?

WANGEL. No; nothing whatever.

ARNHOLM. But do you think it right that he should go about so much with your girls?

WANGEL. Does he — so much? I really had not noticed it.

ARNHOLM. And yet it strikes me that you ought to have an eye to such things.

WANGEL. Yes; there you are right. But, good heavens! what is a poor man to do? Girls are now so well accustomed to take care of themselves. They will not be spoken to, either by me or Ellida.

ARNHOLM. Not even by her?

WANGEL. No; besides, I can not expect her to concern herself with such things. She is not fit for it. (*Changing abruptly.*) But this is not what I want to talk about with you. Tell me, have you thought any further of that matter—the matter I mentioned to you.

ARNHOLM. I have thought of nothing else since we parted last night.

WANGEL. And what do you think is to be done?

ARNHOLM. Dear doctor, it seems to me that you, as a medical man, must know better than I.

WANGEL. Oh, if you only knew how difficult it is for a doctor to decide rightly for a sick person whom he so dearly loves! And this, too, is no ordinary case. Here no ordinary physician can be of any use, nor any ordinary remedies.

ARNHOLM. How is she to-day?

WANGEL. I was but just up with her, and she seemed to me quite calm. But beneath all her moods there lies something hidden which I find it impossible to lay my finger on. And then she is so variable, so uncertain; she changes so unexpectedly.

ARNHOLM. The result, no doubt, of her disordered state of mind.

WANGEL. Not that alone. It lies in the depths of her nature. < Ellida is a child of the sea; that is the real truth. >

ARNHOLM. What precisely do you mean by that, dear sir?

WANGEL. Have you never observed that the people who live by the open sea are, as it were, a folk by themselves? Almost as though they lived the life of the sea. There is a surge and an ebb and flow, too, both in their thoughts and in their emotions, and so they can never be transplanted. Ah! I should have thought of that sooner. It was really sinning against Ellida to bring her away from the open shore and set her down here.

ARNHOLM. Is that the conclusion you have come to?

WANGEL. Yes, more and more. But I ought to have told myself this beforehand. I knew it in my heart from the first, but I would not allow it to find utterances, even to myself. I loved her so well, you see! And I thought first and foremost of myself. I was so inconceivably selfish then.

ARNHOLM. Well, under such circumstances every man is, to be sure, a little selfish. But, otherwise, it is a fault I have never remarked in you, my dear Wangel.

WANGEL (*restlessly walking to and fro*). Oh, yes; and afterwards again I was selfish. I am so much, so very much older than she. I ought to have been like a father to her — and a guide. I ought to have done my best to develop and enlighten her mental life. But, alas, I never did anything of the kind; I have no zeal for that sort of thing, you see. I would rather have kept her just what she was. But then she grew worse and worse, and I went on, not knowing what was to be done. (*In a lower tone.*) And that was why, in my great trouble, I wrote to you to come to us.

ARNHOLM (*looks at him in amazement*). What! That was the reason why you wrote?

WANGEL. Yes; but do not let it be known.

ARNHOLM. But what in the world, my dear doctor — what did you hope for from me? That I do not understand.

WANGEL. No, that is very natural; for I was on a wrong scent. I thought that Ellida's heart had been given to you long since, that she still secretly clung to you; that, perhaps, it might do her good to see you again and to talk with you of her home and the old days there.

ARNHOLM. Then it was your wife that you meant when you wrote that there was "some one" here who looked for me — and, perhaps, was longing to see me.

WANGEL. Yes — who else could it be?

ARNHOLM (*hastily*). To be sure — you are right — but I did not understand.

WANGEL. Very naturally, as I said. But I was on the wrong scent.

ARNHOLM. And you blame yourself for selfishness?

WANGEL. Ah, I had a great sin to expiate. I felt as though I could neglect no means which might possibly relieve her mind a little.

ARNHOLM. And how do you account for the power which this stranger exerts over her.

WANGEL. My dear friend — there is a side of that which does not admit of any explanation.

ARNHOLM. Which is inexplicable do you mean? In itself inexplicable?

WANGEL. Inexplicable, at any rate for the present.

ARNHOLM. Do you believe in such inexplicable things?

WANGEL. I neither believe nor reject them. I simply do not know. So I let them be.

ARNHOLM. Aye, but tell me one thing. Her astonishing and mysterious assertion, that her child's eyes ——

WANGEL (*vehemently*). I do not believe a word of it. I will not believe such a thing. It must be pure imagination on her part and nothing else.

ARNHOLM. Did you notice the man's eyes when you saw him last evening?

WANGEL. Certainly I did.

ARNHOLM. And you detected no resemblance?

WANGEL (*evasively*). Well — good heavens, what can I answer? It was somewhat dusk when I saw him, and Ellida had said so much about the likeness — I hardly know whether I was able to look at him without prejudice.

ARNHOLM. No, no. It may be so—— But the other thing — the fact that all this dread and uneasiness came upon her just at the time when this man seems to have set out on his homeward voyage?

WANGEL. Well, you see that is a thing which she may have invented or dreamed a day or two ago. It certainly did not come over her so suddenly — all in a moment — as she now declares. But since she heard from this young Lyngstrand that Johnson — or Freeman — or whatever his name may be — that this man started on his return voyage three years ago, in the month of March, she is evidently convinced that her distress of mind began at the very same time.

ARNHOLM. And was it not so?

WANGEL. Nothing of the sort. Traces and signs of it had been discernible long before. At the same

time, as it happened, it was in March three years since that she had a somewhat violent attack ——

ARNHOLM. Indeed!

WANGEL. But that can be very simply explained by the state — the circumstances — at the time.

ARNHOLM. Thus it is symptom against symptom.

WANGEL (*clenching his hands*). And to be unable to help her —— To know of nothing that I can do —— To see no help, no remedy ——

ARNHOLM. If you could only make up your mind to change your place of residence—to move elsewhere. So that she might live under conditions in which she would feel more at home.

WANGEL. My dear fellow, do you suppose that I have not suggested that already? I proposed to her to go to Skjoldvik. But she refuses.

ARNHOLM. Even to do that?

WANGEL. She does not think it would do her any good. And in that perhaps she is right.

ARNHOLM. You think so? H'm.

WANGEL. Yes. Besides, as I consider the matter, I really do not know how I could possibly manage it. For the girls' sake I do not see how I could carry them off to such an out-of-the-way spot. They must live in a place where there is at any rate some small chance of their being one day provided for.

ARNHOLM. Provided for? Are you thinking of that already?

WANGEL. God knows, I must think of it. But then, on the other hand, there is my poor sick Ellida — oh! My dear Arnholm, with one thing and the other, I am really between two fires.

ARNHOLM. As regards Bolette, you need be under no anxiety. (*He interrupts himself.*) I wonder where she — where they are gone? (*He goes to the open door and looks out.*)

WANGEL (*looking at the piano*). Oh, I would make any sacrifice — for those three. If I knew what to do.

ELLIDA *comes in from the left.*

ELLIDA (*abruptly to WANGEL*). Only do not go out this morning.

WANGEL. No; certainly I will not. I will stay at home with you. (*He points to ARNHOLM, who comes towards them.*) But will you not speak to our friend?

ELLIDA (*turning round*). Oh, is it you, Mr. Arnholm? (*Offers him her hand.*) Good morning.

ARNHOLM. Good morning, Mrs. Wangel. Are you not bathing to-day, as usual?

ELLIDA. No, no, no. I can not think of such a thing to-day. But will you not sit down a minute?

ARNHOLM. No; thank you very much; not now. (*He looks at WANGEL.*) I promised the girls that I would follow them into the garden.

ELLIDA. God only knows whether you will find them in the garden. I never know where they may be.

WANGEL. Oh yes. They are sure to be down by the pond.

ARNHOLM. Well, I shall, no doubt, find some track of them. (*He bows and goes out to the right by the veranda.*)

ELLIDA. What o'clock is it, Wangel?

WANGEL (*looking at his watch*). A little past eleven.

ELLIDA. A little past — and at eleven or half-past eleven to-night the steamship comes back. Oh, if only that hour were past!

WANGEL (*going close up to her*). Dear Ellida, there is one thing I should like to know.

ELLIDA. What is that?

WANGEL. The evening before last, when we were up at the "Bellevue," you said that often during the last three years you had seen him plainly close to you.

ELLIDA. Yes, and so I have. You may believe me, indeed.

WANGEL. Well, and what did he look like?

ELLIDA. What did he look like?

WANGEL. I mean, how did you picture him; how did he look when he appeared before you?

ELLIDA. But, my dear Wangel, you yourself have seen what he looks like.

WANGEL. Does he look the same as you had pictured him?

ELLIDA. Yes, exactly.

WANGEL. And how was it that you did not recognize him at once?

ELLIDA (*startled*). Did I not recognize him?

WANGEL. No. You yourself said afterwards that at first you could not think who the strange man was.

ELLIDA (*much struck*). Yes, I really believe you are right. Does not that seem strange to you, Wangel, to think that I did not know him at once?

WANGEL. It was only by his eyes, you say?

ELLIDA. Ah, yes—those eyes, those eyes!

WANGEL. Well, up at the Bellevue you told me that he always appeared to you as you had seen him at the time when you parted. Now, that is ten years ago.

ELLIDA. Did I tell you that?

WANGEL. You did.

ELLIDA. Then he must have looked much the same at that time as he does now.

WANGEL. No; for you gave quite another description of him the other evening as we were walking home. Ten years ago he had no beard, you said, and he was quite differently dressed. And the breast-pin with the pearl—the man yesterday had nothing of the kind.

ELLIDA. No; he had not.

WANGEL (*looking at her steadily*). Now think a little, my dear Ellida. Or perhaps you can no longer remember how he looked when you stood with him on Bratthammer.

ELLIDA (*considering and closing her eyes*). Not very clearly. No—to-day I can not see him. Is it not very strange?

WANGEL. Not so very strange after all. A fresh actuality has been brought before you, and that has cast a shadow over the old one so that you can no longer see it.

ELLIDA. Do you really think so, Wangel?

WANGEL. Yes; and it has cast a shadow over your bewildered brain, too. So far it is well that the reality should have come.

ELLIDA. Well? Do you say it is well?

WANGEL. Yes. It may bring about your recovery.

ELLIDA (*sitting down on the sofa*). Wangel, come and sit here by me. I want to tell you all I think.

WANGEL. Do so, dear Ellida. (*He takes a chair on the opposite side of the table.*)

ELLIDA. It was a great misfortune for both of us—that we, of all people, ever should have met.

WANGEL (*amazed*). What do you say?

ELLIDA. Yes, indeed. It was, and it is easy enough to see why. It could be nothing but a misfortune considering the way in which it came about.

WANGEL. What was the way —

ELLIDA. Only listen, Wangel. It is of no avail that we should any longer lie to ourselves — or each other.

WANGEL. Is it a lie? Do you say so?

ELLIDA. Yes, I do; or at any rate we do not confess the truth. And the truth, the plain, honest truth is — in short, that you came and bought me.

WANGEL. Bought you! Bought you?

ELLIDA. Oh, I was no better than you. I consented. I was ready to sell myself.

WANGEL (*looking at her in distress*). Ellida, have you really the heart to say this?

ELLIDA. But there is no other word for it. You could no longer endure the void in your home. You were looking about for a second wife —

WANGEL. And for a mother for my children, Ellida.

ELLIDA. That also, no doubt — as a secondary matter. Nevertheless — you hardly knew whether I could fill the place; you had scarcely seen me, and had spoken to me but seldom. You took a fancy to me, and so —

WANGEL. Oh, call it what you please!

ELLIDA. And I, for my part — I was helpless and unholpen — utterly alone. It was only natural that I should consent when you came and promised to provide for me for life.

WANGEL. I did not think of it as a provision for life, my dear. I asked you honorably whether you would share with me and my children the small maintenance I could call my own.

ELLIDA. Yes, you did. But I ought not to have accepted it. Not at any price — Never ought I to have sold myself! Rather the basest toil, the most wretched life — but of my own choice and free will.

WANGEL (*rising*). So the five — six years that we have lived together are altogether worthless in your eyes?

ELLIDA. Nay, do not think that Wangel. With you I have had all the good in life that a human being may hope for. But I did not come into your house of my own free will. That is the point.

WANGEL (*looking at her*). Not of your own free will?

ELLIDA. No; it was not with my free will that I came with you hither.

WANGEL (*gloomily*). Ah! I remember. He returned yesterday.

ELLIDA. And his return is at the bottom of everything. It has thrown light on everything. Now I see —

WANGEL. And what do you see?

ELLIDA. <I see that the life we have lived together is in truth no real marriage.>

WANGEL (*bitterly*). You never spoke a truer word. The life we now lead is no true marriage.

ELLIDA. Nor has it ever been. Never from the beginning. (*She gazes into vacancy.*) The first — that might have been a true marriage.

WANGEL. The first; what *first* do you mean?

ELLIDA. Mine — with him.

WANGEL (*in bewilderment*). I do not understand in the least.

ELLIDA. Ah, my dear Wangel! Do not let us deceive each other — or ourselves either.

WANGEL. No, no — But what then?

ELLIDA. Well, you see, we can not get over the fact that a promise freely given is as binding as any formal pledge.

WANGEL. But what in the world —

ELLIDA (*passionately rising*). Let me be free to leave you, Wangel.

WANGEL. Ellida! Ellida!

ELLIDA. Yes, yes; only let me go. Believe me, it can not end in any other way.

WANGEL (*controlling his grief*). And has it really come to this?

ELLIDA. It must come to this; it could not be otherwise.

WANGEL (*looking at her sadly*). Even our life in common has failed to win you. Never, never have you been wholly mine.

ELLIDA. Oh, Wangel; if I could have loved you how gladly I would. As truly as you deserve to be loved. But I feel so surely that it will never come.

WANGEL. Then a separation — a formal separation — is that what you desire?

ELLIDA. You do not understand me, dear. I care nothing for formalities, for it seems to me that mere externals have nothing to do with the matter. What I want is that we should agree to part, of our own free will.

WANGEL (*bitterly and slowly nodding his head*). Annul the bargain. Very good.

ELLIDA (*eagerly*). Exactly so! Annul the bargain.

WANGEL. And then Ellida? Afterwards? Have you reflected how things will appear to us both? How life is to shape itself then, for you and for me?

ELLIDA. That matters not. Afterwards that must be as it may. What I beg and implore of you, Wangel — what is of real importance — is that you will release me, restore me to absolute freedom.

WANGEL. Ellida, it is a terrible demand, which you lay before me. Let me at least have time to consider my decision. Let us discuss the case more fully. And take time yourself to weigh what you are doing.

ELLIDA. But there is no time to be lost in such discussion. I must be free at once, to-day!

WANGEL. Why especially to-day?

ELLIDA. Why? Because he is coming to-night.

WANGEL (*startled*). He, he? What has the stranger to do with this matter?

ELLIDA. I desire to face him a free woman.

WANGEL. And then, what do you propose to do next?

ELLIDA. I do not want to shelter myself with the excuse that I am another man's wife, or that I have no choice. I could then exercise no judgment.

WANGEL. No choice, do you say, Ellida? Do you speak of a choice — a choice in such a matter?

ELLIDA. Yes. I must be free to choose between the two alternatives. I must either let him go away alone or else go with him.

WANGEL. Do you yourself understand what you are saying? Go with him? Place your whole fate in his hands?

ELLIDA. But did I not place my whole fate in your hands; and that without question?

WANGEL. That may be. But he, he a perfect stranger; a man of whom you know so little?

ELLIDA. Aye, but I knew less, perhaps, of you; and yet I came with you.

WANGEL. You knew at any rate, to some extent, what sort of life you would lead. But in this case, consider, what do you know about it? Nothing, whatever; not even who he is, or what he is.

ELLIDA (*gazing before her*). That is true. <But that is just the horror of it.>

WANGEL. Yes, it is a horror —

ELLIDA. And that makes me feel as if I could not help myself.

WANGEL (*looking at her*). Because it is a horror to you?

ELLIDA. Yes, for that very reason.

WANGEL (*approaches her*). Listen, Ellida. Exactly, what do you mean by a horror?

ELLIDA (*considering*). A horror — is something which terrifies and attracts —

WANGEL. Attracts?

ELLIDA. Generally; yes — I should say so.

WANGEL (*slowly*). You are akin to the sea.

ELLIDA. And that, too, is a horror.

WANGEL. It is a horror in your nature. You, too, terrify and attract.

ELLIDA. Do you think so, Wangel?

WANGEL. I have never really known you till now; never thoroughly understood you. I begin to do so at last.

ELLIDA. Then you must set me free! Release me from the tie to you and yours! I am not what you thought me, that you yourself have discovered; so now we can part with a clear understanding, of our own free will.

WANGEL (*sadly*). It would, perhaps, be best for us both that we should part. And yet I can not. You are that horror to me, Ellida. But in you the attraction is strongest.

ELLIDA. Do you think so?

WANGEL. Let us try to get through this day in sober reflection, with a calm mind. This day I dare not release you. I have no right to do so — for your own sake, Ellida. It is my right and my duty to protect you.

ELLIDA. To protect me! Against what? There is no force, no power from without which threatens me. The horror lies deeper, Wangel. The real horror is that which lies in myself. And what can you do against that?

WANGEL. I can strengthen and help you in the struggle against it.

ELLIDA. Aye, if I wished to struggle against it.

WANGEL. And do you not?

ELLIDA. That is just what I do not know myself.

WANGEL. To-night must settle everything, dear Ellida —

ELLIDA (*with a cry*). To think that the decision is so near! The final cast for a whole lifetime.

WANGEL. And to-morrow —

ELLIDA. Ah! to-morrow! Perhaps my whole future life will be wrecked.

WANGEL. Wrecked, Ellida!

ELLIDA. All the freedom of a whole lifetime wrecked — wrecked so far as I am concerned. And for him, too, perhaps!

WANGEL (*gently, taking her wrist*). Ellida. Do you love this man?

ELLIDA. Do I? — Ah, how should I know? I only know that to me he is a horror, and that —

WANGEL. Well —

ELLIDA (*freeing herself*). That I belong to him — as it seems to me.

WANGEL (*hanging his head*). I begin to understand it all.

ELLIDA. And what remedy have you for it all? What advice can you give me?

WANGEL (*looks at her mournfully*). To-morrow he will be gone. Then this misfortune will be averted, and then I am ready to release and emancipate you. Then Ellida, we will annul the bargain.

ELLIDA. To-morrow! But, Wangel, to-morrow will be too late.

WANGEL (*looking out into the garden*). The children are coming. The children! Let us spare them—for the present.

ARNHOLM, BOLETTE, HILDA and LYGSTRAND *come up the garden. LYGSTRAND takes leave and goes away to the left; the others come into the room.*

ARNHOLM. Only think, we have made a plan——

HILDA. We are going out on the fiord this evening.

BOLETTE. No, no; do not tell.

WANGEL. We, too, have made a plan.

ARNHOLM. Indeed!

WANGEL. To-morrow morning Ellida is going to Skjoldvik for a short time.

BOLETTE. Going——

ARNHOLM. That is most wise, Mrs. Wangel.

WANGEL. Ellida pines to go home; home to the sea.

HILDA (*running up to Ellida*). You are going away! Leaving us!

ELLIDA (*startled*). Why, Hilda, what possesses you?

HILDA (*checking herself*). Oh, nothing. (*Mutters as she turns away.*) Well, then, go!

BOLETTE (*cautiously*). Papa, I see it in your face; you are going, too, to Skjoldvik?

WANGEL. Certainly not—to see her, perhaps, now and then.

BOLETTE. And we—here——

WANGEL. I shall see you, too.

BOLETTE. Yes, now and then.

WANGEL. Dear child; it can not be otherwise. (*He goes to the other side of the room.*)

ARNHOLM (*aside to BOLETTE*). We will talk of this later.

He goes up to WANGEL, and talks to him in an undertone, near the door.

ELLIDA (*in an undertone to BOLETTE*). What was the matter with Hilda. She looked quite disturbed.

BOLETTE. Have you never discovered what Hilda thirsts for, day and night?

ELLIDA. Thirsts for?

BOLETTE. Ever since you came into the house.

ELLIDA. No, no — what is it?

BOLETTE. One loving word from you.

ELLIDA. Ah! Can this then be a task in life for me? (*She clasps her hands on her head, staring into space, as if torn by contradictory thoughts and moods.*)

WANGEL and ARNHOLM *walk up and down in whispered conversation.*

BOLETTE (*looks into the room on the right and then opens the door*). Luncheon is on the table, dear father, if you —

WANGEL (*with an effort at composure*). Indeed, dear; that is well. Allow me, professor — we will go and drink a “stirrup cup” to the Lady of the Sea.

They go off to the right.

ACT V.

[*The corner of the garden by the pool. Summer twilight, gradually growing darker. ARNHOLM, BOLETTE, HILDA and LYGSTRAND are in a boat going along the bank to the right.*]

HILDA. Look. Here we can easily jump on shore.

ARNHOLM. No, no. Do not try.

LYGSTRAND. I can not jump.

HILDA. And you, professor — can you jump?

ARNHOLM. I would rather not.

BOLETTE. Let us pull up to the steps by the bathing-house.

They pull away and off to the right.

BALLESTED comes at the same moment by the footpath from the right, carrying a music-box and a horn. He greets the party in the boat, turning to speak to them. Their replies become more and more distant.

BALLESTED. What do you say? On account of the English vessel, of course. Because this is the last time it will come this year. But if you want to hear the music you want to make haste. (*He shouts.*) What do you say? (*Shaking his head.*) I can not hear what you are saying.

ELLIDA with a shawl over her head comes from the left, followed by WANGEL.

WANGEL. But, my dear Ellida, I assure you it is quite early yet.

ELLIDA. No, no. It is not. He may come at any moment.

BALLESTED (*outside the fence*). Hah! Good evening, doctor, good evening. Good evening, Mrs. Wangel.

WANGEL (*noticing him*). Oh, it is you! Is there to be music then, to-night?

BALLESTED. Yes; the Society of Horn-Players intend to perform. We rarely have a sufficient occasion now-a-days. To-night it is in honor of the English vessel.

ELLIDA. The English vessel? Is it in sight yet?

BALLESTED. Not yet. But is coming down among the islands. It will be here before we know it.

ELLIDA. Aye — just so.

WANGEL (*half to ELLIDA*). To-night is the last trip. It will come no more.

BALLESTED. A melancholy thought, doctor. But that is why, as I said, we are to play in its honor. Yes, yes. The pleasant summertime is drawing to a close. The water-ways will be locked, as the poets say.

ELLIDA. The water-ways will be locked — yes.

BALLESTED. It is sad to think of. For weeks and months we have been the gay children of the summer. It is hard to reconcile ourselves to the gloomy season — At first I mean, for man can acclimatize himself to anything, Mrs. Wangel. Yes, indeed, to anything. (*He bows and goes off to the left.*)

ELLIDA (*looking out over the fiord*). Oh, this frightful suspense! This terrible half-hour before the final decision!

WANGEL. Then you are quite determined to speak with him?

ELLIDA. I must speak with him. I must make the choice of my own free will.

WANGEL. Ellida, you have no choice, you have no right to choose, and I give you none.

ELLIDA. You can not hinder me. Neither you nor any one else. You can forbid my going with him—if, indeed, that should be my choice. You can keep me here by force, against my will. That you can do. But that I should make a choice, in my inmost soul—the choice between him and you, which I must and will make—that you can not prevent.

WANGEL. No, there you are right. I can not prevent that.

ELLIDA. Besides, there is here no single thing to withhold me. Nothing in the world which holds or binds me. I have taken no root in your house, Wangel. Your children are not mine—their hearts are not mine, I mean, and never have been. When I go—if I go—either to-night with him, or to-morrow to Skjoldvik, I have not a key to surrender, not an order to leave to either of them—to anyone. So utterly without root am I in your house, so completely outside of it, have I remained from the first.

WANGEL. You, yourself, would have it so.

ELLIDA. No, indeed, not I. I neither would nor would not. I have simply let things go on as I found them when I came. It was you—and no one else—who would have it so.

WANGEL. I thought I was doing the best for you.

ELLIDA. Yes, Wangel, I know that full well. But there is retribution in it—something that will be revenged. For me I can find no binding force, no

mainstay, no help, no strong attraction in what ought to have been ours in common.

WANGEL. I see that clearly enough, Ellida. And for that reason to-morrow morning you shall have your liberty again. Henceforth you shall live your own life.

ELLIDA. Is that what you call my own life? Oh, no! My own true life was dragged out of its groove when I consented to share yours. (*Clenching her hands in impatient distress.*) And now—to-night, in half an hour—he is coming whom I betrayed; he to whom I ought to have clung irrevocably, so long as he clung to me! He is coming to offer me once more—for the last and only time—the chance of living my life over again, my own true life—the life which terrifies me and tempts me, which I can not forego, can not give up of my own free will.

WANGEL. And for that very reason it is needful that your husband—and your physician—should take it out of your hands and act for you.

ELLIDA. Yes, Wangel, I quite understand that. Ah, indeed, you need not believe that there are not times when I feel that it would be peace and salvation to fly to you, and try to defy all the powers of terror and temptation, and yet I can not. No, no, I can not!

WANGEL. Come, Ellida, let us walk up and down a little while.

ELLIDA. I should like it—but I dare not. For he said I was to wait for him here.

WANGEL. Only come. There is plenty of time yet.

ELLIDA. Do you think so?

WANGEL. Ample time, I assure you.

ELLIDA. Then just for a short time. (*They go off in front to the right.*)

ARNHOLM and BOLETTE enter right at the back, down the bank of the pool.

BOLETTE (*noticing WANGEL and ELLIDA*). Look there!

ARNHOLM (*in a low voice*). Hush. Let them go.

BOLETTE. Can you understand what has been going on between those two these last few days?

ARNHOLM. Have you noticed anything?

BOLETTE. As if I could help it.

ARNHOLM. Anything unusual?

BOLETTE. Yes, many things. Have not you?

ARNHOLM. I can hardly tell.

BOLETTE. Yes, you must have; but you will not admit it.

ARNHOLM. I believe it will be very good for your stepmother to make that little journey.

BOLETTE. Do you think so?

ARNHOLM. Yes. I feel sure that it will be a good thing for all parties, if she now and then makes some little trip.

BOLETTE. If she goes off to-morrow to Skjoldvik she will never more come back to us.

ARNHOLM. But, dear Bolette, what has put that into your head?

BOLETTE. I am firmly convinced of it. Only wait, and you will see; she will never come back. At any rate, never so long as Hilda and I are in the house.

ARNHOLM. What, Hilda too?

BOLETTE. Well, she might, perhaps, put up with Hilda, for she is hardly more than a child after all.

And I believe she worships Ellida in her heart. But with me, you see it is different. A stepmother not much older than myself——

ARNHOLM. Dear Bolette, it may, perhaps, not be so long before you yourself leave the place.

BOLETTE (*eagerly*). You don't say so. Have you spoken to my father about it then?

ARNHOLM. Yes, I did mention it.

BOLETTE. Well, and what did he say?

ARNHOLM. Your father has been so much absorbed in other things this day or two——

BOLETTE. Yes, I told you it would be so.

ARNHOLM. But I got so much out of him as this, that you must not count on him for assistance.

BOLETTE. No?

ARNHOLM. He fully went into the subject of his affairs. He thought anything of the kind was quite out of his power.

BOLETTE (*reproachfully*). And you could have the heart to make game of me——

ARNHOLM. Nay, that I did not, dear Bolette. It depends solely on yourself whether you quit this place or no.

BOLETTE. What? It depends on me?

ARNHOLM. Whether you get out into the world, and learn everything you wish to know, and take part in everything which here at home you so long for, and live altogether a pleasanter life. What do you say to that?

BOLETTE (*clasping her hands*). Merciful heaven! But it is impossible, quite impossible. My father neither will nor can——there is no one else in all the world to whom I can look.

ARNHOLM. Could you then not make up your mind to accept such help from your old—your former tutor?

BOLETTE. From you, Mr. Arnholm. Would you really——

ARNHOLM. Give you such assistance? Yes, with all my heart. Both by word and deed. On that you may rely. Do you agree, then? Do you consent?

BOLETTE. Do I consent? To get away—to see the world—to learn something thoroughly. All which has seemed to me the great, impossible delight——

ARNHOLM. Aye, it may all become reality, if only you choose that it shall.

BOLETTE. And you will help me to this wonderful good fortune. Oh, no! Tell me, Mr. Arnholm, can I accept such a sacrifice from a stranger?

ARNHOLM. You can accept it from me — from me you might accept anything, whatever it might be.

BOLETTE (*grasping his hands*). Yes, I almost think I might. I do not know how it is, but —— (*she breaks off*). Oh, I could laugh and cry together for joy, for sheer happiness! Now I shall really live—I was beginning to fear lest life should elude me altogether.

ARNHOLM. You need not fear that, dear Bolette; but now you must tell me truly, is there anything — anything which ties you here?

BOLETTE. Which ties me? Nothing.

ARNHOLM. Positively nothing?

BOLETTE. Positively nothing. That is to say — my father ties me to a certain extent; and Hilda. But ——

ARNHOLM. Well — you will have to leave your father sooner or later. And Hilda will one day go her own

way through life. It is merely a question of time. But is there nothing else which ties you, Bolette? No attachment of any kind?

BOLETTE. No, none. For that matter I can go away and wander anywhere that may offer.

ARNHOLM. If that is the case, dear Bolette, you shall wander somewhere with me.

BOLETTE (*clapping her hands*). Oh, God in heaven! What joy to think of it.

ARNHOLM. For I hope you feel every confidence in me?

BOLETTE. Yes, indeed, I do.

ARNHOLM. And you dare confidently and implicitly to entrust yourself and your future in my hands, Bolette? You will venture on that—tell me?

BOLETTE. Indeed I will. Why not? Can you think otherwise; you, who are my old tutor—my tutor of old, I should say?

ARNHOLM. And not for that reason only. I attach no particular importance to that side of the matter. But—well—you are free, Bolette. There is no tie to bind you—and so I ask you whether you could—whether you would—join your lot to mine—for life?

BOLETTE (*starts back*). What! What did you say?

ARNHOLM. For life, Bolette—whether you will be my wife?

BOLETTE (*half to herself*). No, no. Impossible—quite impossible.

ARNHOLM. Is it really so impossible to you to——

BOLETTE. But you can never mean it seriously, Mr. Arnholm (*looking at him*), or else—to be sure—was that what you meant when you promised to do so much for me?

ARNHOLM. You must listen to me for a moment, Bolette. I seem to have startled you very much.

BOLETTE. Ah, how could such a thing—from you. How could I help being startled?

ARNHOLM. Perhaps you are right. You did not know—you could not know, that it was for your sake that I made the journey hither.

BOLETTE. You came here for my sake?

ARNHOLM. Yes—Bolette—in the spring I had a letter from your father, and in it there was a passage which made me think—well—that you regarded your former teacher with a warmer feeling than friendship.

BOLETTE. How could papa write such a thing?

ARNHOLM. That was not in truth what he meant. But I lived thence forward in the persuasion that there was here a young girl who longed for my coming. Nay, do not interrupt me, dear Bolette. And you see—when a man like me, no longer in his first youth, is led to such a belief—or such a fancy—it makes a deep impression on him. It aroused in me a very lively—a very grateful feeling for you. I felt that I must come to you—to see you once more, to tell you that I shared the sentiment which I imagined you to feel for me.

BOLETTE. But now that you know it is not so! that it was a mistake——

ARNHOLM. It makes no difference, Bolette. That fancy, as I bear it in my heart, will always wear the color and stamp which the mistake aroused in me. You, perhaps, can not understand this; but so it is.

BOLETTE. Never had I thought such a thing as possible!

ARNHOLM. But now that you have seen that it is possible? What do you say, Bolette? Could you not make up your mind to be my wife?

BOLETTE. Oh, but it seems to me so utterly impossible. Mr. Arnholm, you—who were my teacher—I can not think of myself as standing in any other relation to you.

ARNHOLM. Well, yes. And if you still do not think that you can, our relations will remain unchanged, dear Bolette.

• BOLETTE. How do you mean?

ARNHOLM. I shall of course keep my promise all the same. I will take care that you get out of this place and see the world; that you learn something which you really care to learn; that you live in sheltered and independent circumstances. And your later future shall also be made safe for you, Bolette, for in me you will always find a true, faithful and trustworthy friend. Of that you may be perfectly certain.

BOLETTE. But good heavens, Mr. Arnholm, you have made this all impossible.

ARNHOLM. What! is this, too, impossible?

BOLETTE. Yes, you must see that it is. After what you have said — after the answer that I gave you — Oh! You yourself must understand that I can not possibly accept such an immense boon from you. I can accept nothing, nothing from you now. Never — after that.

ARNHOLM. Then you would rather remain sitting at home here, and let your life slip away?

BOLETTE. Oh, that is terrible, miserable to think of!

ARNHOLM. Would you rather give up the notion of

seeing something of the world? Sacrifice the hope of all the experiences you yourself told me that you long for? Know how much there is to be learnt, and nevertheless never learn it thoroughly? Reflect, Bolette.

BOLETTE. Yes, yes. You are very right, Mr. Arnholm.

ARNHOLM. Besides — when, some day, your father is no more, you perhaps will find yourself alone and helpless in the world. Or, again, you might marry another man for whom you could — it is possible — feel no affection.

BOLETTE. Oh, yes. I see well enough how true it all is — all you say. But, nevertheless — and yet, perhaps —

ARNHOLM (*quickly*). Well?

BOLETTE (*looks at him doubtfully*). Perhaps it might not be quite impossible.

ARNHOLM. What, Bolette?

BOLETTE. That I might arrange — to agree — to your proposal.

ARNHOLM. Do you mean that perhaps — that you will at least allow me the happiness of providing for you as a faithful friend?

BOLETTE. No; oh, no! Not that. That must be quite out of the question. No, Mr. Arnholm, it would be better that you should take me —

ARNHOLM. Bolette — really — you will?

BOLETTE. Yes, I think — I think I will.

ARNHOLM. You will indeed be my wife?

BOLETTE. Yes. If you still think that — that you will have me.

ARNHOLM. If I still ——! (*Taking her hand.*) Thank you, oh thank you, Bolette. What you said before — your indecision — does not alarm me. If I can not yet feel that your heart is wholly mine, I shall know how to win it. Oh, Bolette, I will carry you in my arms, as it were.——

BOLETTE. And I am to see the world, to live a real life? You promised me that.

ARNHOLM. And I will keep my word.

BOLETTE. And I am to be allowed to learn everything I wish?

ARNHOLM. I shall myself be your teacher; as I used to be, Bolette. Do you remember the last year of our studies?

BOLETTE (*calmly meditative*). To think — to know that I am free to go out into the world! To have no anxiety for the future. Not to have to concern myself about stupid money matters ——

ARNHOLM. No; and is it not true, dear Bolette, that this of itself is a good thing? Tell me.

BOLETTE. Yes, it is indeed. That is quite certainly true.

ARNHOLM (*puts his arm round her*). Oh you will see how snug and happy we shall be, and how well and peacefully and smoothly we shall get on together, Bolette.

BOLETTE. Yes. I begin — I believe in my heart that we shall be happy. (*She looks out to the right and hastily frees herself.*) Oh, but say nothing about it.

ARNHOLM. What is it, sweetheart?

BOLETTE. There is that poor fellow. (*Pointing.*) Look, out there.

ARNHOLM. Your father?

BOLETTE. No; the young sculptor. He is walking with Hilda.

ARNHOLM. Oh, Lyngstrand. What is wrong with him?

BOLETTE. You know how weak and ailing he is.

ARNHOLM. Yes — Unless it is pure imagination.

BOLETTE. Oh, no. It is true enough. He certainly can not last long. But for him, perhaps, that is best.

ARNHOLM. My dearest, why should *that* be best?

BOLETTE. Because — because he certainly never will make anything of his art. Let us be gone before they come.

ARNHOLM. With all my heart, my own Bolette.

HILDA and LYNGSTRAND *come in from the pool.*

HILDA. Hi, hi! Will these gentle folks not wait for us?

ARNHOLM. Bolette and I would rather go out for a while.

He and BOLETTE go off to the left.

LYNGSTRAND (*with a quiet laugh*). It is really most amusing. Here folks always go about in pairs. Always two and two.

HILDA (*looking after them*). I could almost swear that he is making love to her.

LYNGSTRAND. Indeed! Have you discerned that?

HILDA. To be sure. It is not very difficult to see, if only you keep your eyes open.

LYNGSTRAND. But Miss Bolette will not accept him; of that I am quite sure.

HILDA. No. For she thinks he has grown too dreadfully old to be looked at, and she believes, too, that he will soon be bald.

LYNGSTRAND. Aye, but that is not all. She would not have him in any case.

HILDA. How can you know?

LYNGSTRAND. Because there is some one else whom she has promised to think of.

HILDA. Only to think of?

LYNGSTRAND. When he is absent; yes.

HILDA. Oh! Then it is you, no doubt, of whom she is to think.

LYNGSTRAND. May be; and why not?

HILDA. Did she promise you she would?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes, only fancy! She promised me. But you must never tell her that you know of it.

HILDA. Heaven seal my lips! I am as silent as the grave.

LYNGSTRAND. It seems to me that it is very sweet of her.

HILDA. And when you come home again will you be betrothed to her, and married to her?

LYNGSTRAND. No, that would never do. I dare not think of such a thing for the next few years, and by the time when at last I shall have got on, she will be too old for me, I fancy.

HILDA. But then would you have her wait and think of you forever?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes; that would be most useful to me. To me as an artist, you understand. And she can quite easily do it, since she herself has no special calling in life. But it is very sweet of her all the same.

HILDA. And do you suppose that you can get on better with your work as an artist if you know that Bolette is still thinking of you?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes, I fancy so. You see that knowing there is somewhere in the world a young, and tender, and silent woman who is dreaming of me—I fancy that must be so—so—well, I hardly know what to call it.

HILDA. So inspiring, perhaps, you mean?

LYNGSTRAND. Inspiring? Just so. Inspiring, or something of the kind. (*He gazes at her for a minute.*) You are so clever, Miss Hilda, you are really very clever. When I come home again, you will be about as old as your sister is now. Perhaps, too, you will look very much like what your sister is now. Perhaps, you will be yourself and her—both, both together in one person, as it were.

HILDA. Is that what you would like?

LYNGSTRAND. I do not exactly know. Yes, I almost think so. But at present, for this summer, I would rather that you should be yourself alone. Exactly what you are.

HILDA. You like me best so?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes. I like you very much so.

HILDA. Now tell me, as an artist—do you think that I should always wear light summer dresses?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes; I think nothing could be better.

HILDA. You think that light colors suit me?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes. To my taste light dresses suit you to perfection.

HILDA. But tell me, as an artist—how do you think I should look in black?

LYNGSTRAND. In black?

HILDA. Yes, all in black. Do you think I should look well?

LYNGSTRAND. Black is not quite the thing for summer wear. However, you would certainly look remarkably nice in black, too. It would suit you particularly well, with your style of beauty.

HILDA (*gazing before her*). Black up to the chin, a black frill, black gloves and a long, black veil hanging behind?

LYNGSTRAND. If you were so dressed, Miss Hilda, I could wish I were a painter. I should paint you as a young, beautiful, mourning widow.

HILDA. Or as a young girl mourning for her lover?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes, indeed — better still. But you can not wish to dress so?

HILDA. I don't exactly know. But I fancy it would be inspiring.

LYNGSTRAND. Inspiring!

HILDA. Inspiring to think of, yes. (*She suddenly points to the left.*) Only look there!

LYNGSTRAND (*looking out*). The big English packet! And quite close by the landing-place.

WANGEL and ELLIDA come back by the pond.

WANGEL. Nay, I assure you, dear Ellida, you are in error. (*He sees the others.*) What, are you here? Tell me, Mr. Lyngstrand, she is not in sight yet?

LYNGSTRAND. The English packet?

WANGEL. Of course.

LYNGSTRAND (*pointing to it*). There she lies, Dr. Wangel.

ELLIDA. Ah! I was sure of it.

WANGEL. In already!

LYNGSTRAND. Come like a thief in the night, as you may say. So quietly and noiselessly —

WANGEL. You should go down to the landing place with Hilda. There you will hear the music.

LYNGSTRAND. We were just going, doctor.

WANGEL. We, perhaps, may follow you. Presently — soon.

HILDA (*aside to LYNGSTRAND*). They too are a pair! *She and LYNGSTRAND go off through the garden to the left. Horns are here heard in the distance from the fiord throughout the next scene.*

ELLIDA. It has come! He is here! Yes, yes. I feel it.

WANGEL. You had better go in, Ellida. Leave me to talk to him alone.

ELLIDA. Ah, no, impossible! Impossible, I tell you (*she screams*). Oh — do you see him, Wangel?

The STRANGER comes from the left and stands on the path outside the fence.

STRANGER (*bowing*). Good evening. Here I am 'once more, Ellida.

ELLIDA. Yes — oh, yes! The hour has come!

STRANGER. Are you ready to start? Or are you not?

WANGEL. You can see for yourself that she is not.

STRANGER. It is not her traveling dress, or anything of that kind that I ask about. Nor whether her trunks are packed. Everything that she can need for the voyage I have ready on board. I have also secured a cabin for her. (*To ELLIDA*.) I ask you. Are you ready to come with me — to follow me of your own free will?

ELLIDA (*beseechingly*). Oh, do not ask me! Do not tempt me! (*The steamboat bell is heard in the distance.*)

STRANGER. That is the first bell for going on board. You must say yes or no.

ELLIDA (*wrings her hands*). I must decide—decide for life. It can never be undone.

STRANGER. Never. In half an hour it will be too late.

ELLIDA (*looks at him in timid inquiry*). Why do you cling to me so persistently and immovably?

STRANGER. What! Do you not feel, too, that we belong to each other?

ELLIDA. By reason of that promise do you mean?

STRANGER. Promises bind no one—neither man nor woman. The reason why I cling to you so immovably is because I can not help it.

ELLIDA (*trembling, in a low voice*). Why did you not come sooner?

WANGEL. Ellida!

ELLIDA (*cries out*). Oh! This which is dragging, tempting, compelling me—away to the unknown! All the powers of the sea are united in this man.

The STRANGER gets over the fence.

ELLIDA (*shrinks behind WANGEL*). What is this? What do you want.

STRANGER. I see, and I hear, Ellida, that I am your choice.

WANGEL (*going towards him*). My wife has no power to choose; I am here, both to choose for her and to protect her. Yes, to protect her. If you do not take yourself off—out of the country—never to return, do you know to what you expose yourself?

ELLIDA. No, no, Wangel. Not that.

STRANGER. What will you do to me?

WANGEL. I will have you imprisoned as a criminal forthwith, before you can get on board. For I know all about the murder at Skjoldvik.

ELLIDA. Oh, Wangel! How can you——

STRANGER. I was prepared for this; and so (*he takes a revolver out of his breast-pocket*) I provided myself with this.

ELLIDA (*throwing herself in front of WANGEL*). No, no! Do not kill him! Kill me rather!

STRANGER. Neither you nor him. Be easy on that point. This is for my own use; for I will live or die a free man.

ELLIDA (*in increasing excitement*). Wangel, let me tell you—so that he may hear it. You can keep me here; you have the power and the means for that—and that you will do! But my heart—my thoughts, my yearning, longing desires, you can not bind. They will still rebel and strive after the unknown. Away, away! For that I was born and from that you have cut me off!

WANGEL (*in deep grief*). I see very plainly, Ellida, that inch by inch you are slipping away from me. This craving for the boundless and the infinite—for the unattainable—will finally cloud your mind in the blackness of night.

ELLIDA. Yes, oh, yes! I feel it already—black, noiseless wings above my head.

WANGEL. But it shall not come to that. I see no other way of saving you; look where I will I find no other. And so I now and here revoke the bargain.

You may choose your own way—in perfect, absolute liberty.

ELLIDA (*gazing at him for a while as if speechless*) Is it true—true—what you say? Do you mean it from the bottom of your heart?

WANGEL. Yes; from the bottom of my sorrow-stricken heart.

ELLIDA. You can really do it? You can bear to do it?

WANGEL. I can. I can do it because I love you so well.

ELLIDA (*in a low voice, trembling*). Am I so near—so dear to you?

WANGEL. Years and our life together have brought it about.

ELLIDA (*clasping her hands*). And I—I had never perceived it.

WANGEL. Your thoughts have been elsewhere. But now you are completely and utterly released from all ties to me and mine. Now your own true life begins—returns into its right groove. Now you are free to choose. The responsibility is yours, Ellida.

ELLIDA (*clasping her head and staring out into vacancy beyond WANGEL*). Free to choose—on my own responsibility—responsibility! In this—in this the difference lies.

The steamboat bell is heard again.

STRANGER. Do you hear, Ellida; the bell is ringing for the last time. Come.

ELLIDA (*turns to him, looks at him fixedly, and says in a loud tone*). Never. I will never go with you after this.

STRANGER. You will not!

ELLIDA (*clinging to WANGEL*). I will never leave you after this.

WANGEL. Ellida! Ellida!

STRANGER. Then it is all over?

ELLIDA. Yes! Over forever.

STRANGER. I see that clearly enough. Here is something stronger even than my will.

ELLIDA. Your will has no longer the smallest power over me. To me you are a dead man who have risen from the sea and gone back into it again. But you are no longer a horror to me and you no longer attract me.

STRANGER. Farewell, then. (*He leaps over the fence again.*) Henceforth you are nothing in my life — but a shipwreck I have survived. (*He goes off to the left.*)

WANGEL (*gazes at her for a minute*) Ellida, your soul is like the sea. It has its ebb and flow. Why this sudden change?

ELLIDA. Oh! can you not understand that the change came — that it could not but come — as soon as I was free to choose.

WANGEL. And the unknown — has it no longer any charm for you?

ELLIDA. Neither charms, nor terrors. I might look into it; I might have gone forth to it, if only I had chosen to do so. I was free to choose it and for that reason I could forego it.

WANGEL. Now I begin to understand you, little by little. You think and feel in pictures, in living images. Your longing and pining for the sea, its attraction for you, and the power of that stranger

were the experience of your growing yearning for liberty. Nothing else.

ELLIDA. Oh, I do not know what I can say to that; but you have been a good physician to me. You discovered and you dared to use the right remedy, the only remedy that could cure me.

WANGEL. Yes; in the extremest need and danger we doctors dare greatly. But now are you mine once more, Ellida?

ELLIDA. Yes, my dear, faithful Wangel. Now I am indeed yours again. Now I can be, for now I go to you in freedom — of my own free will and responsibility.

WANGEL (*looks tenderly at her*). Ellida! Ellida? Oh, to think that now we can live wholly for each other.

ELLIDA. With our memories in common. Yours as well as mine.

WANGEL. Quite true, my dearest.

ELLIDA. And for our two children, Wangel.

WANGEL. *Ours* do you call them?

ELLIDA. The children who are not indeed mine, but whom I will win.

WANGEL. Ours! (*He gladly and eagerly kisses her hands.*) Oh, how can I thank you for that word!

HILDA, BALLESTED, LYGSTRAND, ARNHOLM and BOLETTE
*come into the garden from the left. At the same time
a party of young people from the town and of summer
visitors gather outside on the path.*

HILDA (*aside to LYGSTRAND*). Why, look. Papa and she look just like a newly-engaged couple.

BALLESTED (*who has overheard her*). It is summer-time, little lady.

ARNHOLM (*looking at WANGEL and ELLIDA*). The English vessel is off.

BOLETTE (*going to the fence*). You can see it best from here.

LYNGSTRAND. Her last trip this season!

BALLESTED. All the water-ways will soon be locked, as the poets say. It is very sad, Mrs. Wangel. So now we lose sight of her for a while, and to-morrow you are going to Skjoldvick, I am told.

WANGEL. No, nothing of the kind. We have decided differently this evening.

ARNHOLM (*looking from one to the other*). Indeed! really!

BOLETTE (*returning*). Papa, is it true?

HILDA (*to ELLIDA*). You will stay with us after all!

ELLIDA. Yes, dear Hilda, if you will have me.

HILDA (*between laughter and tears*). If I will have you! OH!

ARNHOLM (*to ELLIDA*). But this is really such a surprise —

ELLIDA (*smiling, but grave*). Well, Mr. Arnholm, you see — Do you recollect our talk yesterday? As, once for all, we have become land-animals there is no way of escape out to sea again, nor to the life of the sea, either.

LYNGSTRAND. Why, that is exactly like my mermaid.

ELLIDA. Very much so, certainly.

BALLESTED. But with this difference: that the mermaid died of it. Human beings, on the contrary, can accla — acclimatize themselves to it.

ELLIDA. Yes, in freedom they can, Mr. Ballested.

WANGEL. And on their own responsibility, dear Ellida.

ELLIDA (*hastily giving him her hand*). Yes, that is the point.

The steam packet glides noiselessly across down the fiord.

The music sounds nearer and nearer.

